



*Further Stories from  
Lord Halifax's  
Ghost Book*

*In a Uniform Edition*  
LORD HALIFAX'S GHOST BOOK  
With an Introduction by  
VISCOUNT HALIFAX, K G  
8s 6d net

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‘FURTHER STORIES FROM  
LORD HALIFAX’S  
GHOST BOOK



*With a Foreword by*  
VISCOUNT HALIFAX, K.G  
*and an Introduction by*  
J G LOCKHART

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## FOREWORD

WHEN THE SELECTION OF STORIES FROM MY FATHER'S *Ghost Book* appeared last year, several people wrote to ask for a further instalment. There still remained a number of interesting stories which for various reasons, were not included in the first collection. Some of these are authenticated by direct record, and have been here printed. But in the case of some of the others my father mislaid, or forgot to write in, his authority, which has consequently not been preserved. It seems none the less a pity to omit a good tale merely on that account, and so a selection of these unauthenticated entries is now included, as are three longer stories, which originally appeared in magazines and are obviously fiction, but are good of their kind, and 'The Countess of Belvedere' which is not a ghost story at all, but the record of an exceedingly strange chapter in the history of the Molesworth family.

HALIFAX

*June 1937*



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## INTRODUCTION

GHOSTS AND GHOST STORIES HAD AN EXTRAORDINARY fascination for Lord Halifax during the whole of his long life. When he was a boy at Eton, he and some friends tried table-turning, a practice he was afterwards to view with stern disapproval. The results were most gratifying, as, on returning to bed, he was constrained to keep his candle burning for most of the night. The interest, if not the method, continued, and in the last weeks of his life he insisted upon my reading one of his favourite stories, 'The Man in the Iron Cage', which appeared in Part One of the published *Ghost Book*. He assiduously collected tales from friends like Bishop Wilberforce and Bishop Browne (who followed Wilberforce at Winchester), Abbot Aelred Carlyle and Monsignor Benson, Augustus Hare and Lord Stanmore, and if a story struck him as particularly good he put it into his *Ghost Book*.

He was really rather frightened of ghosts, and at the same time most eager to see one. He once persuaded the late Duke of Newcastle and Monsignor Benson to accompany him to Brockley Manor, a heavily haunted house near Bristol. There if anywhere, he thought, the wished-for experience might be met. The house was empty and deserted, with brambles growing up to the sills of the windows. The three men went in and spent an uncomfortable but disappointingly ghostless night in

separate rooms, departing at four in the morning, after Hugh Benson had said Mass.

In 1904, the present Lord Halifax inherited Temple Newsam from his aunt, Mrs. Meynell Ingram. This was an historic house on the outskirts of Leeds, originally a preceptory of the Knights Templar, later the home of the luckless Darnley, and entirely to the taste of old Lord Halifax. Here, again, it seemed that a ghost should be met. Lady Halifax, who had none of her husband's craving for supernatural adventures, thought so, and always felt uneasy in the house, particularly when she was sleeping in the Blue Room. At any rate, one winter night in 1908, Temple Newsam gave Lord Halifax the nearest approach to a ghostly experience that he ever had. It was about a quarter past twelve and he was on the point of going to sleep, when, by the light of the fire, he saw, or thought he saw, a woman in blue cross the bedroom and vanish into the Damask Dressing-room, where his sister, Mrs. Dundas, was sleeping. That was all. When he had lit a candle nothing was to be seen, and he was never quite sure that he had not dreamt the apparition.

Hickleton, his old home, was even more unsatisfactory. It claimed a real ghost in a Mrs. Box, a housekeeper who had hanged herself in the remote past and was reputed to walk the corridors. But no one saw her in Lord Halifax's days and she was a disappointing phantom, only of use as a diversion and an agreeable stimulus at Christmas parties. She served this

#### INTRODUCTION

inferior purpose tolerably well. The present Lord Halifax, when a small boy, was heard to admit a certain distaste for the darker passages in which Mrs Box might conceivably be lurking, and in 1918 his father, then aged seventy-nine, actually impersonated the lady on Christmas evening, to the mild alarm of his younger guests.

Lord Halifax's other home, Garrowby, gave more scope to his fancy. In 1892 and 1893, when he transformed and enlarged the house, he indulged his love of the romantic in history by constructing a priest's chamber, a secret passage, spy-holes, hidden springs on doors, and so forth, while he gratified his taste for the uncanny by hanging masks of demoniac aspect in places where an unsuspecting visitor might suddenly encounter them. If the house could not have a ghost, it must at least provide an occasional thrill, perhaps stimulate the imaginations of the inmates, a process which Lord Halifax always thought most desirable. It was about Garrowby, too, that he wrote 'Colonel P's Ghost Story', his solitary literary contribution of the kind, which appears at the end of Part One of *Lord Halifax's Ghost Book*.

The present volume brings the collection to a close. With a few trifling exceptions, all the stories which Lord Halifax gathered in the course of his long life will have appeared. They are presented in the hope and belief that they may give others some of the pleasure that they once gave him.

J G LOCKHART

May 1937



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*Sbrieks in  
the West Room  
at Flesbury*

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**Q**Lord Halifax copied the following story from a manuscript, written by the sister of John Cansen, the child concerned, who died on April 22nd, 1835 aged eleven. He added the information that the house where the events of this narrative occurred is *Flesbury* a lonely country house on the north coast of Cornwall. The family who reside there are the only descendants of the Cansens of Cansen, in Cornwall. The names are given as they appear in the Ghost Book, but Cansen should probably be *Cansnew* the name of an old Cornish family and *Flesbury* should probably be *Flexbury* near Bude.



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SHRIEKS *in the WEST ROOM at FLESBURY*

A PLAIN STATEMENT OF THE FACTS, AS THEY OCCURRED without any attempt to embellish or magnify them, will be given.

Early in 1835 my brother John was taken seriously ill, and for many weeks his life hung in the balance. A crisis was reached and passed, followed by a fortnight of mingled hope and despair. At the end of that time his condition showed so great an improvement that the most sanguine hopes for his recovery were entertained by all the family except his mother and aunt, who continued to be very anxious so long as the doctors were unwilling to give a decidedly favourable opinion.

It was between five and six o'clock on a fine spring evening, towards the end of March. The sinking sun was cheerfully lighting up the West room, where three of John's sisters and his brother William were sitting, having just left their father in the dining-room. Their mother and aunt had returned to John's room. The West room adjoins the principal staircase, which leads up from the entrance hall through the centre of the house. There is a small landing at the door of the West room, the stairs ascending a little further to the principal landing. A second flight leads to the upper landing, on which opened the room occupied by John. Owing to the centre of the house being open, any sound in the hall is distinctly audible on the upper floor. The offices are reached by a long

SHRIEKS *in the WEST ROOM at FLESBURY*

passage behind the hall and the dining-room, so that ordinary sounds from the hall or the staircase cannot be heard there.

The children in the West room were all in the highest spirits. They were no longer feeling anxious about their brother and were even a little inclined to think that their elders had been unnecessarily alarmed. Poor dear Johnnie, they told each other, after all the fuss that had been made, was getting well. To be sure, it was impossible to spoil him; he was such a dear good boy and never made a fuss about himself. But even now Mamma and Aunt would not believe that he was not going to die. In fact, that very day at dinner, Mamma had been actually crying again. The children went on to discuss the two doctors who were attending John. The younger of the two had particularly annoyed them that day in reporting on the state of the patient to their father. While admitting an increase in strength and appetite, he had added, 'Still, I see no improvement.' 'Papa said he was ridiculously inconsistent,' one of the children remarked; and someone went on to say something which raised a general laugh. The laughter had not ceased when a piercing shriek rang through the room. It was as if uttered by someone standing on the landing just outside the open door.

There was silence, and then a second shriek like the first; another silence, and then yet a third shriek, even louder and more prolonged than the others, and ending in a rattling, gurgling sound, as though someone were dying.

SHRIEKS *in the WEST ROOM at FLESBURY*

The children in the room were struck with horror. None of them is likely to forget that awful sound. As I write, it seems to ring in my ears.

In a moment the door of the drawing-room, on the further side of the hall, was thrown open, and Mr Carnsen, who had been sitting in the room alone, hurried across the hall to the foot of the staircase. He called in an agitated voice to his daughter, whom he knew to be in the West room 'Gertrude, what is the matter? Who is screaming in that dreadful manner?'

'Papa,' we answered, 'we don't know. It wasn't one of us, though it seemed quite close.'

'It sounded as though someone were in great distress,' our father said. 'Go down to Grace and ask her if the people in the kitchen are all right, although the noise did not seem to come from there.'

Gertrude went at once and found the housekeeper alone in the big front room. She was standing as if listening and declared she had distinctly heard three shrieks. She was wondering what could be the matter and though positive that the sound had come from further off than the kitchen, she went there to enquire if the servants knew anything.

When she returned her usually florid face was quite pale. 'Oh, Miss Gertrude,' she said, 'there is no hope for Master John—that is what it means. What we heard was none of the servants, and no human voice. The servants heard the screams too but they seemed to come from far off.'

‘How can you talk such nonsense?’ Gertrude replied. ‘A person like you ought to know better. Papa says you *must* find out what it was and let him know.’

The girl then returned to the hall, where she found her father talking to the old doctor, who had just arrived. Mr. Carnsen was saying: ‘It was like a woman’s voice, screaming as though in the utmost distress. You would have supposed she was being murdered.’

The doctor replied that he had been crossing the lawn at the time, and that if the noise had come from outside the house, he must have heard it.

After Gertrude had reported the failure of her enquiries, her father asked her to tell her mother, who was in John’s room, of the doctor’s arrival. On her way upstairs, she looked into the West room, where she found that the others had been joined by Ellen, a faithful and attached servant, with the youngest child, then about two and a half, in her arms. Ellen said they had been in one of the rooms on the first landing when they had heard the shrieks, coming, as it were, from the West room or near it. The child asked, ‘Who is screaming, Ellen? I didn’t scream’; and picking her up the maid had run to the West room to find out what was the matter.

One of the children remarked: ‘Poor Johnnie! How frightened he must have been!’

Whereupon Ellen suggested: ‘Could it have been Master John seized with a fit?’

SHRIEKS IN THE WEST ROOM AT FLESBURY

Struck with this idea, Gertrude ran upstairs. The door of her brother's room was partly open, and when she went in she saw him lying with a very placid look on his face. As she passed the bed, he gave her a look and a smile, but did not speak. Her mother was resting on the sofa and her aunt was reading by the window. Nothing in short, could have been quieter or more composed than the room and its inmates.

After announcing the doctor's arrival, Gertrude went over to the bed to discover if possible, without alarming her brother, if he had heard the shrieks.

"Johnnie, how quiet you look!" she said. "Have you been asleep?"

"No, Gertie," he replied, "I was not asleep and I knew the doctor had come. I heard Dash give his little bark"—meaning a short single bark which the old dog, who lay on a mat in the hall always gave when the doctor arrived. So it seemed that John had heard the bark, but not the awful shrieks which had rung through the house and been heard by everyone in it except himself and those who were with him.

The doctor was now on his way up and Gertrude, as she left, beckoned to her aunt to follow her. In the West room she told her of their experience, the aunt replying that everything had been exceptionally quiet that afternoon in John's room. He had been lying awake, but without speaking for some time and no unusual noise of any kind had been heard.

An immediate search was made, every possible and im-

possible cause being sought for and suggested; but all was in vain; no explanation was forthcoming.

Next morning, the doctor came to breakfast, accompanied by his brother, the old clergyman, who occasionally visited John; and while they were there, the housekeeper and the farm bailiff were called in and questioned as to the result of the enquiries which, by Mr. Carnsen's orders, they had made. One point was clear: the sounds had been made *in* the house, since no one outside had heard them. The accounts of all those inside the house tallied: there had been three shrieks at short intervals; it was as though a woman's voice were being strained to the utmost; and the noise had ended in a dying rattle. What was most unaccountable was that the shrieks were loudest on the staircase, close to the West room, and therefore should have been distinctly audible in John's room just above; yet everyone there was utterly unconscious of them.

Nothing more could be done. The servants were given strict orders not to allow any report of what had happened to leak out. Mr. Carnsen, who disliked the subject so much that no one ventured afterwards to allude to it in his presence, enjoined a similar silence on the children. The clergyman, after hearing all the evidence, pronounced the incident to be of a kind for which it was impossible to give a natural explanation. He told us that we could not pretend to deny the reality of what we had heard, but must not give way to superstitious

SHRIEKS IN THE WEST ROOM AT PLESDURY

fancies Some lesson or warning which time would make more clearly known, was intended

From that day onwards, even those of us who had been most hopeful, found their confidence gone, though for another week John's health continued to show signs of improvement.

After that he took a turn for the worse, and three weeks from the day when the shrieks were heard he died

It may be asked whether a similar warning was given on the occasion of the death of any other member of the family Fifteen years later, John's young sister, Emma, was on her deathbed In the middle of the night, just before the end, those who were watching in her room heard sounds of hysterical wailing and lamentation passing through the house The noises ceased as she drew her last breath A few months later, when the daughters were watching by the deathbed of their mother they had so strong an expectation of hearing that unearthly voice once more, that they told each other they ought to doubt the evidence of their senses if it came but it did not come. Nor was any warning given of the deaths of two of the sons in distant lands, or when Mr Carnsen himself passed away in March 1860 as he knelt in prayer by his bedside.



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## *The Shrouded Watcher*

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**G**THIS curious tale was taken from *Blackwood's Magazine* for January 1891.



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#### THE SHROUDED WATCHER

IT IS MANY YEARS SINCE THE FOLLOWING REMARKABLE incident in my life took place. For the ordinary commonplace details of everyday experience my memory is generally indifferent, but the circumstances in this case were such that they have indelibly fixed themselves in my recollection, as though they had occurred yesterday.

At the time I allude to, I was a very raw young ensign, scarcely done with the goose-step. My regiment was quartered in the —— Barracks, situated in a suburb of Valletta, the capital of Malta.

To make my narrative clearer, I will begin by presenting to the reader the chief character in it.

Ralph D—— was a young fellow with an odd history. What brought him to Malta none of us ever exactly knew. He was understood to have been in one of 'John Company's regiments, but whether horse or foot, I cannot remember. His own account was that he had left the Indian service (for some unexplained reason) and having found his way to Vienna, got himself into a regiment of Austrian cavalry, as not a few British ex-officers managed at that time to do. But, for reasons best known to himself and the authorities, his stay in the Emperor's service was not of long duration, and when I joined my regiment in Malta, D—— was a well-known character among the English residents and garrison. Not that the

notoriety was altogether conducive to his fair fame; but D—— had a singular way of worming himself into the good graces of a particular set, and passed for a gentleman of affable manners, much wit, and especially a certain bold *diablerie* that stuck at nothing, and gave him a kind of popularity among the more daring spirits in society. How well I can call up his appearance! Dark, brilliant eyes and black hair; a tall lithe figure, with a very peculiar but really bewitching smile on occasions when it suited him to please; and a beautifully shaped contour of head and profile. He was known to be of good family, and as he had been in the service, my regiment had made him an honorary member of our mess; and I rather think another corps in garrison had given him the same *entrée* into theirs. At all events, he was on pretty good terms with some of our fellows, though our colonel and one or two of the older officers certainly did not encourage him much, as his example was not considered beneficial to the juniors.

D—— was a wonderful billiard player. I never saw anyone to beat him at losing hazards or the spot stroke. As to pool, our 'lives' were as nothing in his hands; and at all card games in particular, both the skill and the luck of the man were extraordinary. Night after night I have seen him at play, and his winnings must have almost sufficed to maintain him. As to other traits in his character, I am sorry to say I never heard of one single good or generous sentiment that could be traced

to him. D——'s talk at the mess table or in the ante-room was of the most cynical flavour it was ever my lot to hear, and though *de mortuis nul nisi bonum* is an excellent and decent moral to abide by truth compels me to add that some very sinister tales of D——'s influence over the other sex had got about at the time I speak of. What has now come to be dignified with the name of hypnotism was unknown as such in those days, but I believe D—— possessed some conspicuous powers in this direction, and I am afraid was not always over-scrupulous in his use of them. Even at this distance of time his portrait stands out clear in my mind's eye, with a kind of Rembrandt like sheen upon it, by reason of the mysterious shadow in the background which was to loom up and cover it with the blackness of night. I ought perhaps to add, for the better understanding of what is to follow, that for a little while before the *dénouement* came, some ominous whisperings got afloat among us about D——, and the methods whereby so much silver and gold was perpetually being transferred at whist and *écarté* from other people's pockets to his own. For in my long experience of those holding her gracious Majesty's commission, notwithstanding a black sheep here and there, it is not to be denied that scrupulous honour and fair dealing have ever been in the forefront of their traditions.

I now come to the memorable day of the occurrence of the strange incident, to one phase of which I and others—most of them gone now—were eye-witnesses.

The season was Holy Week, towards the end of April 18—. Music has always been a passion with me, and every afternoon preceding Good Friday in that particular week, when I could get off duty from the dust and glare of the white parade-ground and the monotonous bawling of the drill-sergeant, it was my wont to steal away to the Duomo of San Giovanni. And who that has ever sat in that stately cathedral church, and in the dimly lighted atmosphere, odorous with incense, listened to the entrancing strains of the Office of Tenebrae, could ever forget it?

The eve of Good Friday arrived. I had gone over to see a friend on the Verdala side of the Grand Harbour and was returning after dark. The night was still, calm, and cloudless. The air was deliciously soft. As I sat in the stern of the gondola-shaped galley, while the dark figure of the boatman silently plied his long sweeps, great grey ramparts frowned on every side, and lights twinkled, flashing back in wavering duplicates from the faintly rippling water. I was soon alongside the low jetty on the Valletta side, and, ascending the great flight of steep stone steps, presently found myself in the strait Strada Reale. Here it was no easy matter threading one's way, for the procession of the Stazione, representing the main incidents of the Passion, was passing up the street. At all times this pageant has seemed to me full of solemnity, notwithstanding that the symbolic figures used are often somewhat tawdry. In the intense silence and deep reverence of the

THE SHROUDED WATCHER

spectators, as the wail of the music swells louder and louder, in the sacred form upraised on a colossal cross, flanked by the two malefactors on lesser crosses, in the sudden baring of all heads, as the shrouded platform bearers go by—in all this one feels the cardinal truth borne in upon one despite all the gewgaws and evanescent emotion of the scene

There were reasons why this strange Passion procession on this particular Holy Thursday night should have stamped itself deep upon my memory. Even at the time it seemed to capture me, as I passed up the long narrow street out of hearing of the wild music, and reached the great stone gateway of our barrack square.

The echo of the sentry's sharp challenge, followed by Pass, friend—all's well, had hardly died down when I found myself at the door of my quarters, which faced the officers' mess block. By this time the Paschal moon, all but full, was high in the sky, and cast a great shadow from the tall buildings facing the range of barracks across the parade-ground. Though on this night superfluous, a feeble oil-lamp flickered here and there, for gas was a luxury not then indulged in, and the department which was charged with these things loved darkness better than light, because it cost less.

I should here explain that Thursdays were the guest nights of my regiment at that time, and on this evening the regimental band had as usual been playing on the open space just outside, fronting the mess-room windows. It must have been

past eleven o'clock when I reached barracks; and although most of the outsiders who were allowed in to hear the music on such occasions were gone, I noticed two or three still waiting about. One in particular, a remarkably tall man in a long dark cloak, was standing under one of the mess windows with his back to me. I sauntered into my room, lit a cigar, and came out again, to muse in the quiet moonlight over the *Tenebrae* and the *Stazione*. By this time the loiterers were all gone except the tall cloaked man, who appeared to have never moved or changed his position since I saw him first. The open windows of the mess-room were still aglow, and through the boughs of a row of lank stunted trees along the enclosure wall one could see the distant twinkling lights of the town.

Something in the appearance of this solitary shrouded figure attracted and fixed my attention. To be so attired on a warm balmy night like this, in a semi-tropical climate, seemed peculiar. And I had already been struck by his phenomenal stature, contrasted with those who had been standing beside him. Who could the man be, and what on earth was he waiting there for? It crossed my mind that this must be either one of the dominoed *incogniti* who had been following in the Passion procession, or else one of the Capuchins from a neighbouring monastery; but a friar would hardly stroll in to listen to a military band, and then stand stock-still alone under the windows of the officers' mess. With the passing thought came the sound of pretty loud talking, and occasionally a

laugh, from the lit-up ante-room opposite, where it was plain some of our fellows were probably engaged at whist, loo or some other card game. Why I cannot tell, but along with a feeling of undefinable repulsion towards him, an impulse seized on me to watch the muffled stranger closely, and at the same time I had an awakening consciousness that I had better walk straight over and ask the man what he wanted there at that time of night. As my gaze fastened itself on the motionless figure, whose head seemed in the bright moon light to be bent a little to one side in an intent listening attitude, I became aware of a kind of chill and numbness creeping through my limbs, with that horrible sense of inability to move forward one occasionally experiences in dreams when something dreadful is going to happen which one wants to avert. Yet, whoever the man was, most assuredly he must be watching and waiting and listening for something or somebody in the mess-room, with that strained intentness yet absolute quiescence of posture! But why this vehement and altogether unaccountable foreboding of impending evil borne in upon me?

These thoughts, however were all the work of a few seconds, when, with eyes still riveted on the mysterious watcher I heard several voices within the room calling out in excited tones, as though some altercation were going on. One voice above all the others came with a kind of strident harshness through the open window in which it was easy to

recognise D——'s hard and distinct accents. I seem to hear the words rasping out now as I write. 'I tell you, I dealt myself the ace of spades'; then another voice, young N——'s, 'I take my oath you didn't'; and then a terrible imprecation from D——, which I will not repeat, invoking the Prince of Darkness to the ruin of his soul and body, if what he had stated was not the truth.

As the last words struck on my ear, the tall cloaked figure made an instantaneous movement, leaped up with a light swift spring to the window-sill he was standing under, and disappeared through the muslin curtains into the room, for I was unable to see farther into it from my position. Another instant, and an ear-piercing scream rang out—a harsh, appalling cry as of mingled pain, rage, and terror, from one in dire extremity—and to my horror and utter amazement he in the cloak reappeared at the window with D—— gripped in his arms, and half slung over one shoulder, apparently struggling desperately. One instant both faces were visible in the moonlight, D——'s ghastly and convulsed, the other set back in its sombre hood and covered with a black domino, from the eyelets of which I was near enough to catch a lightning flash of fiendish malignancy and exultation. Ere I could collect my bewildered senses sufficiently to rush across to stop them, which I did a moment later, both men had vanished round an angle of the building. After them I rushed, shouting to the gate-sentry to alarm the guard, but on reaching the rear of the

block not a soul was in sight. Out turned the guard, and telling the sergeant to take a file and search the enclosure for two men fighting, I ran round to the mess-room. Meanwhile, and before I could reach the entrance-door to the mess, the bell inside was ringing out peal after peal, and an officer came tearing out full tilt, nearly knocking me down. What is it? I burst out. Where's C—— (our regimental doctor)? 'Is he in his quarters?' he demanded, and away he rushed towards the quarter where Dr C—— lived. I ran into the ante-room along with one or two of the mess-waiters, helter-skelter. And what a sight inside! There, huddled in a group with pale scared faces, a whist-table overturned, and a litter of cards strewn all over the floor, were some half-dozen of my comrades of the —th, stooping over the prostrate form of D—— who lay motionless, with lips apart, eyeballs fixed and staring, his head lying back supported by one of our fellows. The surgeon, C—— came in a minute after, tore open D——'s waistcoat and shirt, looked hard at him, knelt down and put his ear to the drawn mouth, felt about the region of the heart, and shook his head. D—— was dead.

As for myself, I could hardly believe my senses. The man I had just seen bodily carried off struggling in the arms of an unknown individual, lying here dead—it seemed an absolute hallucination! I was too taken aback to ask a single question but as my enquiring eyes went round the circle of assembled officers, I could see in the countenances

of all a certain constraint mingled with their horror, but not a syllable was said. It was plain there was a further mystery behind.

The remains of the ill-fated D—— were removed to a spare room in the officers' quarters, and there laid out to await official proceedings on the morrow.

It was not till after the funeral that I learned what had caused the uproar and altercation in the mess-room, which immediately preceded the terribly sudden catastrophe of that memorable night. And even at this distance of time I tell the circumstances with pain and reluctance. D—— had dined with the regiment, and after the band had finished playing, he and some half-dozen subalterns sat down to play *vingt-un*. The stakes were high, and it was noticed that D—— turned up a remarkable number of 'naturals'. N——, a not long-joined ensign, had been dealt an ace of spades and 'stood'. At the conclusion of the round, D——, who was dealing, again showed a 'natural', the ace of which proved to be the ace of spades. This, of course, was too much for young N——, green as he was. Hence the indignant remonstrance wafted out to my ears in the barrack square, followed by that awful oath. Whereupon, according to some of the party, a momentary gust of air seemed to shake the farther window-sash, and simultaneously the card-table was stirred—it was, they said, like the tremor of a slight earthquake shock—and straightway D—— threw his hands up and fell back in his

chair gurgling like one in a fit. The rest I have told, and I will say no more upon it.

Needless to say, the officers of her Majesty's—th were for long thereafter chary of conferring upon outsiders the privilege of honorary membership of their mess. We kept our impressions as far as possible to ourselves, though something about them necessarily leaked out through the guard and sentry I had hailed, and from my original statements concerning the pair I believed I had seen so palpably in the moonlight.

When the formal inquiry by the military and civil authorities came on, it was elicited from the non-commissioned officer of the night-guard that no person of the description I gave had been seen to enter or leave the barrack precincts. The certified cause of death was stated to be aneurism, spasm, or something of the heart—what I suppose we loosely call heart disease. The affair was rather hushed up, in deference to the feelings of D—'s relatives, one of whom came out to the island shortly afterwards to make inquiries and settle up the affairs of the deceased.

It may be suggested that what I witnessed in the square was no more than a phantasm of my own brain. I should probably have inclined to such a view myself, but for one circumstance. In the room above mine, and looking out on the square towards the mess-house, was quartered a very dear fellow rather a favourite with us, although hardly robust enough for a soldier's

life. It happened on this very Thursday evening that this man, S—, who had been ailing of Malta fever, was lying on a couch in his room by the open window—the night being so warm—and listening to the band. He was still there when I came into barracks and was arrested by the sight of the tall, solitary figure opposite. When, several days after the event, I touched on the subject, S— broke in with a very troubled face, and in a serious, urgent voice asked: 'Did you see the man in the long cloak waiting for him?' Then I knew that whatever extra vision had been vouchsafed to me had been shared by him.

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## *Apparitions*

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THE GHOSTLY PASSENGER  
THE FAWN LADY OF BURTON AGNES  
THE PAGE BOY OF HAYNE  
THE GHOST OF LORD CONYERS OSBORNE  
THE GHOST OF LADY CARNARVON  
THE GHOST OF BISHOP WILBERFORCE  
THE SHIP IN DISTRESS  
THE WIDOW IN THE TRAIN  
KILLED IN ACTION



THE GHOSTLY PASSENGER

*Lord Halifax* had this story from a *Yorkshire* friend and neighbour who was told it by *Captain Wintour* four years ago. It was a special favourite, and he used to relate how once, driving in a dog-cart with a *Yorkshire* groom, he told it to his companion, whose comment pleased him greatly. 'There is nothing strange about that, my Lord,' the groom had said, 'because the soul always returns to the body once in twenty-four hours until the funeral.'

ONE EVENING, AFTER A DAY'S SHOOTING AT HOME, I WAS on my way to stay with my friend Marsh at *Gaynes Park*. I had a drive of some fourteen miles to make and at one point had to cross a bridge over a stream. As I approached, I saw a man leaning over the parapet and looking down into the river below. Noticing that he had a bag by his side and thinking he might be tired, I stopped the dog-cart which I was driving and offered to give him a lift if he was going in my direction. He climbed into the cart without a word and sat there in silence. I made two attempts to draw him into conversation, but gave up trying when he made no sign of responding.

We drove along for some miles together in silence, until we came to a village, where I pulled up rather suddenly, outside the inn. By this time it was quite dark. The inn was lighted up. Some people were standing in front of the house, and the ostler came forward at once to take my horse's head. My companion got down and without one word of thanks to me walked straight into the inn. 'Who is that man who has just climbed

down?' I asked the ostler. He replied that he had not seen anyone. 'Well, the man I drove up with,' I said; to which he answered: 'You drove up alone, Sir.'

Feeling very uncomfortable, I went into the inn and sent for the landlord. When I told him of my companion and described him, he looked grave and asked me to follow him upstairs. He took me into a room, and there on a bed lay the man to whom I had given the lift. He was dead, and had been dead for some time; in fact, an inquest had just been held on his body. A day or two earlier he had been found drowned in the stream, close to the bridge where I had seen him.



#### THE FAWN LADY OF BURTON AGNES

*Burton Agnes* is a famous *Yorkshire* house, of which many ghostly stories have been told, particularly in connection with the *Screaming Skull*. The following short tale was sent to *Lord Halifax* in 1915 by *Mrs. Wickham-Boynton*, the owner.

Mrs. Lane Fox<sup>1</sup> tells me that you were interested to hear I had seen the ghost here last month and that you would like to know more about it. We were having tea in the hall, when I looked up suddenly and saw a small thin woman dressed in *fawn* colour come out of the garden, walk very quickly up the steps, and disappear through the front door, which I thought was open, into the house. I imagined it must

<sup>1</sup>Lord Halifax's daughter, now Lady Bingley

### THE FAWN LADY of BURTON AGNES

be the parson's wife and remarked to my husband who had seen nothing 'There is Mrs Coutts. Go and bring her in.' He went out at once, but presently came back to say that there was no one there and that the front door was shut.

Then I remembered the old story of a fawn lady who had been seen about the place. Oddly enough, the last time she appeared, many years ago she was also hurrying up steps into the house but they were the steps on the east front. My father saw her and followed her inside, but she had vanished. She is probably the Griffith ancestress, A.D. 1620, whose skull is still in the house here, though no one knows exactly where it is walled up. Her sister and heir married Sir Matthew Boynton and so brought Burton Agnes into the family. Of course I am told it was all imagination, but it was very curious.



### THE PAGE BOY OF HAYNE

In 1885 when *Lord Halifax* was staying with his father-in-law at Powderham Castle Devonshire among the guests was a *Lady Ferguson Dark* wife of *Sir John Ferguson Dark* of Creedy who was old *Lord Devon's* nephew. One evening, when ghost stories were being told in the hall, *Lady Dark* made the following contribution.

Some years ago Mr Harris of Hayne, in Devon, had a good deal of his plate stolen, and with the plate there disappeared a little page boy who had been for some time in his service. Although every effort was made, neither the plate nor

the boy could be traced, and Mr. Harris was so much upset by the whole occurrence that he went away and was absent for a good long while. One night, shortly after his return home, he saw, or fancied he saw, the page boy standing at the foot of his bed. Supposing that he had been dreaming, or that his imagination had played him a trick, he turned over and went to sleep, scarcely giving the matter another thought; the next night he again saw, or fancied he saw, the same figure standing by his bedside, and again he took no notice; but when on the third night the page boy appeared once more, Mr. Harris got up out of bed, and when the figure left the room he followed it. The boy moved down the passage and the stairs, always a little ahead of him, turning round constantly and beckoning to him, as though he were trying to lead him somewhere. At length he passed out of the house altogether, with Mr. Harris still following, and came to a wood close by. Here he disappeared, at the foot of a very large hollow tree.

Next day Mr. Harris had the tree cut down. Inside it were found the remains of the boy and a portion of the plate. The discovery led to the apprehension and confession of the butler, who admitted that he had made away with the plate little by little, as opportunity offered; that he had hidden it in the hollow tree until he was able to dispose of it; and that, finding that the page boy had discovered what was going on, he had murdered him, concealing the body in the tree with the plate.

THE GHOST OF LORD CONYERS OSBORNE

THE GHOST OF LORD CONYERS OSBORNE

Under the date November 16th, 1884, *Lord Halifax* wrote in the *Ghost Book*.

I was staying with the Rev John Sharp on the occasion of his jubilee, when the Bishop of Winchester<sup>1</sup> who was also there, told the following stories. George William Frederick, 6th Duke of Leeds, married Lady Charlotte Townshend, daughter of George, 1st Marquis Townshend. Their second son, Lord Conyers Osborne, who was up at Christ Church, was killed accidentally by Lord Downshire on May 6th, 1812. The Bishop had the story from Mrs George Portal, whose aunt, Lady James Townshend, had married the brother of the Duchess of Leeds. Lady James had told Mrs. Portal that one evening she was sitting writing in her room, when she saw Lord Conyers, wearing a dressing-gown which she had embroidered for him, walk straight through. She rang the bell and asked the butler if Lord Conyers had come. The man replied that he had not, seeming surprised at the question and hinting that Lady James must have been asleep and dreaming. She, however, was so much impressed by what she thought she had seen that, before going to bed, she wrote to Lord James to tell him about it.

Next day Lord Conyers servant arrived from Oxford. He asked to see Lady James, and when he was shown into her

<sup>1</sup>Bishop Harold Browne, a ghost-hunter after Lord Halifax's heart.

room, told her that his young master had been killed wrestling with Lord Downshire at Christ Church. He begged her to break the news to the Duchess of Leeds, as he did not dare do so himself.

Years afterwards, when Lord James was dead, Mrs. Portal was reading over and tearing up old letters with her aunt, and in a bundle of them, which she was about to destroy, she found the letter to Lord James, describing Lord Conyers' appearance.



#### THE GHOST OF LADY CARNARVON

The Bishop [Lord Halifax went on] also told us this story, on the authority either of Mrs. or Miss Portal, who lived close to Highclere, Lord Carnarvon's place in Hampshire.

Some time ago, Lord Carnarvon's brother, the Hon. Alan Herbert (who was a doctor in Paris) was lying dangerously ill at Highclere. One day, when he was almost unconscious, the nurse saw a lady dressed in black enter the room and draw back the curtains of the bed. She then nodded her head in a very peculiar way. The nurse did not know who the lady was, but supposed her to be some relation staying in the house. Some time afterwards, when Mr. Herbert was getting better, the housekeeper, showing the nurse over the house, took her into Lord Carnarvon's private sitting-room. 'Why,' said the nurse, pointing to a picture over the chimney-piece, 'there is the lady who came into the room and looked at Mr. Herbert.'

### THE GHOST of LADY CARNARVON

It was a portrait of Lady Carnarvon, Alan Herbert's mother, who had died some years before.<sup>1</sup> She always dressed in black and had a peculiar way of nodding her head



### THE GHOST OF BISHOP WILBERFORCE

This story seems to have been collected on the same occasion as the two preceding ones, and the narrator was probably *Bishop Browne*

The late Bishop of Winchester (Dr Wilberforce) had often expressed a wish to see Wooton, Mr Evelyn's place, not far from Guildford. He was particularly interested in a portrait there of Mrs Godolphin, whose life he had written in his early days. Somehow he had never been able to pay the visit, but on the occasion of his death he was riding with Lord Granville about two miles from Wooton. Mr Evelyn, the doctor a Mr Harvey and a brother of Mr Evelyn's were sitting in the dining-room at Wooton when one of the party exclaimed  
Why, there is the Bishop of Winchester looking in at the window! They all looked and saw a figure, which disappeared. They went out to see if the Bishop was there, but there was nobody. Half an hour later a servant came in with the news of the Bishop's death. He had been killed by a fall from his horse on his way to Holmbury, where Lord Granville was living

<sup>1</sup>She was the wife of the 3rd Earl of Carnarvon and died in 1876.

## THE SHIP IN DISTRESS

On board a certain ship, the name of which I cannot recall, the words 'Steer to the north-east' were found one morning written on the slate log in the captain's cabin. No one on board would admit to having written the entry, which excited a good deal of wonder and speculation. The mate, however, said he had an idea that he had seen a strange man writing in the captain's cabin. Eventually the captain altered the course of the vessel and steered north-east, as directed, with the result that later on in the day a water-logged vessel with a starving crew was sighted. When the rescued sailors were taken aboard, the mate, looking at one of them, exclaimed, 'That is the man I fancied I saw writing in the captain's cabin.' The man in question was then asked to write the words 'Steer to the north-east' on a slate, without, however, being told the reason for the request. He did so, and the writing was found to be identical with that previously found on the log. On enquiry, it transpired that this particular man had always been certain that he and his mates would be rescued. Early on the morning of the day on which they were picked up, he had fallen into a kind of trance; and on waking up, he had declared that he was more assured than ever that help was at hand.

A similar story was that of a young midshipman, who was drowned on his way home from a foreign station, yet brought

a letter from the admiral on the station to his wife Mr Church then Vicar of Hickleton, capped this tale with the information that his grandmother had seen her husband walking in the garden in his uniform, at the very moment when, as was subsequently discovered, he was killed on active service in India.



#### THE WIDOW IN THE TRAIN

The *Colonel Ewart* mentioned in this story was very possibly the uncle of *Mr H B Ewart*, an old friend of *Lord Halifax*. *Mr Ewart* has some recollection of having heard the story from his uncle.

A Colonel Ewart was travelling alone by express train from Carlisle to London. He went to sleep and, when he woke up found that a lady in black with a crape veil had entered his compartment and occupied one of the corner seats. As he had been asleep for some time, he supposed she must have entered rather quietly and apologised to her for being without his coat and his boots. The lady made no reply and thinking she might be deaf and had not heard him, he crossed to the other side of the compartment and sat down in the seat opposite to her. But when he repeated his apology she still did not answer and seemed as though she did not hear him. He thought her conduct strange and was still wondering about it when there came a sudden crash. There had been a collision. Colonel Ewart was unhurt and at once jumped out

to see what had happened and if he could be of any use. Then, remembering the lonely lady in his compartment and wondering if she were frightened or injured, he went back. The carriage was empty; there was no trace of the lady anywhere; and the guard declared that the door had been locked, although the collision had forced it open, and that no one could possibly have come in since Carlisle, as the train had not stopped anywhere until the accident occurred.

Later Colonel Ewart learnt that a few years before, a bride and bridegroom had been travelling on the same line and by a corresponding train. The man had put his head too far out of the window to look at something, and it had been caught by a wire, so that the headless body had fallen back into the carriage. At the next station the bride was found singing a lullaby over her husband's body. The shock had driven her completely mad.



#### KILLED IN ACTION

A certain clergyman had three sons. The eldest was serving in the Crimea, and the two younger ones, who were at school, had come home for the holidays. The boys slept in the same room, their beds, which were on opposite sides of it, facing each other, foot to foot. The window of the room was close to the door and could be seen equally well from either bed. One night one of the boys woke up and saw the figure of

his brother, then in the Crimea, kneeling at the window in an attitude of prayer. He called out to his sleeping brother, asking him if he could see anything, and he, waking up replied 'Yes, I see Arthur kneeling at the window.' As they spoke, the kneeling figure turned and gave them a sad and loving look.

The boys were frightened and wondered how they could get out of the room without passing by the kneeling figure. At last they made a rush past the window, reached the door, roused their father, and told him what they had seen. He went up to their room and, finding nothing there, concluded they must have been dreaming. He told them, however, to say nothing to their mother of what they thought had appeared to them.

Two or three weeks later news came from the Crimea of an attack upon the Sandbank Battery, in which Arthur had been killed. One day, after the end of the war, when the troops had come home, the family had a visit from the chaplain attached to the regiment in which Arthur had served. He told them that, though a stranger to them, he had felt so great an interest in their son that he was impelled to come and see them. He went on to say that on the night before the attack on the Battery their son and a few other officers had asked to be given Holy Communion that Arthur was quite certain that he would be killed and that, while expressing no particular wish to live, he had said he would have liked to see his two brothers again.



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*The Troubled  
Spirit of  
Tintern Abbey*

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**Q**This story was privately printed in 1910 and sent to Lord Halifax apparently by the author who subscribed himself E.B.



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### THE TROUBLED SPIRIT of TINTERN ABBEY

IT WAS, I THINK, IN THE SPRING OF 1895 THAT MY WIFE and I went for a bicycling tour along the Wye. In due course we arrived at Tintern, where we proposed to stay for a couple of nights. After luncheon we inspected the ruins, and paid them a second visit after dinner, as it was a delicious evening with brilliant moonlight.

My wife has at times the power of writing automatically. She rarely exercises it, as she somewhat mistrusts herself and therefore prefers to leave these matters alone. However, that evening the beauty and mystery of the ruined Abbey impelled me to ask her if she had any psychic feelings. She replied that she had. We sat down upon a block of masonry and almost at once her right hand was controlled as it were by an invisible agency which made it rap repeatedly on her knee. She asked that the action should be moderated, and I suggested that if anyone wished to communicate with us, three taps should be given for 'yes' and one for 'no'.

Her hand at once rose and fell three times, more gently than before, and we established communication by the tedious but usual process of going slowly through the alphabet until a rap announced that the right letter had been reached. Many questions and answers resulted in our receiving the following information:

The personality or control in communication with us pur-

ported to be that of a Saxon soldier who had died fighting for King Henry II. On my expressing surprise that a Saxon should have been defending a Norman king, he maintained that his account of himself was nevertheless true. He had fallen in the neighbourhood of the Abbey and had been buried without any prayer being said over his body; and although, like most people, he had been neither very good nor very bad, and was not unhappy in his present state, he would be infinitely easier if a Mass could be said for him. When I remarked that the Abbey, near by which he said he had been buried, did not exist in the time of Henry II, he replied that there had been an earlier abbey on the same spot, a statement which I was not in a position to dispute. I then asked how it was that, after the lapse of many hundred years, he should apply for assistance to a couple of Anglicans whose Church did not include prayers for the dead among its doctrines. He answered that he had frequently, but without success, tried to communicate with his descendants and others, that the difference of religion did not affect the question, and that he would be most grateful if we would have a Mass said for him. This we promised to do; whereupon he thanked us and bade us goodnight.

My wife's arm was released from the control and we went home to bed greatly interested but not in the least excited. Either that night or the following morning I wrote to an old friend of mine, Father A—— and, without going into details, told him that, as the result of a strange experience, I was

anxious to see him in order to arrange, if possible, for Masses to be said for the repose of a soul. I added that I was uncertain whether his Church would allow such Masses when there was no means of identifying the person for whom they were to be said.

We visited the Abbey again in the daytime but nothing unusual took place, but that night the same phenomenon occurred, my wife's arm was at once controlled, and a message was given expressing gratitude for what we had done. I asked if we could be of any further help, but was assured that if two Masses could be said, the spirit would never trouble us again. The control then ceased and we went home.

On reaching London a few days later and referring to Green's *History*, I found that the amalgamation between Saxons and Normans had made great progress by Henry II's reign, and, indeed, that the Saxons, having accepted their foreign kings, were the more loyal of the two races, frequently supporting the monarch against his turbulent barons.

Presently I heard from Father A——, giving me an appointment and adding that his Church gave full power to the priesthood to say Masses for the unknown departed. I told him the whole story, which greatly interested him, and he promised to say four Masses for the troubled spirit of the Saxon soldier. In the following year he died. I did not expect to hear anything more of our friend at Tintern, but ten years later, in 1905, he gave us the following reminder of his existence.

One evening in November of that year, having several friends to dinner who were interested in so-called spiritualistic phenomena, we agreed to have a sitting round a table. About seven people were present, among them two ladies known to be possessed of remarkable psychic powers. One of them was an intimate friend; the other we had met that evening for the first time.

We sat down. It was not quite dark, for a fire was burning. At first a number of messages from acquaintances who had passed away were delivered in the usual way by raps or the tilting of the table, until the power seemed to be exhausted and the manifestations ceased. Thereupon our new acquaintance grew impatient and pressed with some heat for further messages to be given. My wife protested, pointing out that we should not try to force the power; whatever it might be, it should be treated with courtesy. The table immediately tilted towards her and slowly rapped out the words 'Very many thanks'. We thought she was being thanked for her remonstrance, but the taps continued. The whole message was 'Very many thanks for the Masses said'. Afterwards the two psychic ladies, who were sitting on either side of my wife, said that they had seen standing behind her the bearded figure of a handsome middle-aged man, dressed in strange close-fitting clothes of a grey material. Some years before, we had told our story to one of the two ladies, but it was not known to anyone else in the room.

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*Labéoyère's  
Doom*

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**Q** This story appeared in the January number of *Fraser's Magazine* 1882. The author was Canon Malcolm MacColl, a well-known priest with whom *Lord Halifax* was personally acquainted



OF ALL NAPOLEON'S VICTORIES, THE BATTLE OF Marengo is considered by military critics to have been on the whole, the most brilliant in conception that he ever fought, as it certainly was one of the most fruitful in its results. Yet, after all, it may be said to have been won by a fluke. The passage of the Alps by the First Consul took the ever-unready Austrians completely by surprise. Their forces were scattered among the fortresses of Lombardy and Piedmont, and their generals were disconcerted by the sudden apparition of Napoleon, and by the unexpected tactics which he pursued. Masséna, with a small French and Cisalpine garrison was shut up in Genoa by an Austrian army and blockading squadron, and both he and the Austrians expected that Napoleon would march to the relief of the besieged Mean while the Austrian commander-in chief, the Baron de Melas, was in Turin hurriedly collecting his forces.

But, instead of marching on Genoa, Napoleon turned to the east and placed his army between the Austrians and their own fortresses. He entered Milan and seized the passages of the Po and the Adda without firing a shot. Piacenza fell an easy prey, and in a few days Melas was completely cut off from his communications north of the Po. The Austrian commander was thus reduced to the dilemma of cutting his way through the French lines or making his escape to Genoa,

Masséna having in the interval surrendered on condition of being allowed to retire with all his garrison.

The besieging force, being thus released from Genoa, hastened to join Baron de Melas at Alessandria. Even then the Austrians could only muster 30,000 men out of the 80,000 which they had foolishly scattered in weak detachments all over Lombardy. Napoleon, whose force was also about 30,000, had his centre half-way between Piacenza and Alessandria. He made sure that Melas would retreat rapidly on Genoa, and despatched accordingly the divisions of Desaix and Monnier to intercept him. But Melas did not retreat. He made up his mind to give Napoleon battle, and quietly awaited his approach at Alessandria. As soon as he discovered the mistake which Napoleon had made, he issued from his stronghold and flung his whole force against the weakened French line, first at Montebello, and then at Marengo.

After seven hours' fighting, the French, in spite of Napoleon's exertions and Murat's brilliant charges, in spite also of the heroic stand made by the grenadiers of the Consular Guard, were driven into a narrow defile where they were exposed to the Austrian artillery and almost surrounded by the Austrian infantry and cavalry. Having made his dispositions and secured, as he thought, his prey, the Austrian commander returned into Alessandria to take a little rest before summoning the French to surrender. So certain did he

feel as to the issue of the battle that he sent out despatches announcing a victory

Meanwhile, however, the sound of the cannonade behind them had reached the ears of Desaix and Monnier and caused them to hurry back to Marengo. They were met by a multitude of panic-stricken French fugitives, who declared that the battle was lost. Then we will win another, gaily replied Desaix. The fugitives immediately turned back with him. The French, thus reinforced, renewed the fight. The Austrians, completely off their guard, were thrown into confusion by the suddenness of the onset, and Murat completed their overthrow by one of his impetuous charges.

The victory was dearly bought by the death of Desaix, but the prize which it yielded was magnificent. The Baron de Melas, utterly stupefied by so great a disaster after so signal a victory, sued for a truce and agreed to purchase it by the surrender of Genoa and all the fortresses of Lombardy and Piedmont. Probably he had no alternative, for he was completely severed from his communications and his army was broken and demoralised.

The battle of Marengo was thus a turning-point in Napoleon's career. The fortunate return of Desaix at the critical moment saved the First Consul from surrender or death. What a change in the map and history of Europe those few hours made! Napoleon knew well the importance of securing to himself in the estimation of the French the sole credit of the

victory of Marengo. He collected and destroyed every document which told the true story of the battle and wrote his own account of it in a despatch which ascribed all the glory of victory and its stupendous consequences to his own genius and courage. To possess the French mind with his own story of Marengo was in fact to establish his ascendancy beyond the reach of all competitors.

How was this to be accomplished? It did not take Napoleon long to decide that question. He had a favourite young *aide-de-camp*, Labédoyère by name, on whose zeal and devotion he could thoroughly rely. To him he entrusted the task of bearing the Napoleonic version of the battle of Marengo to Paris. Relays of fresh horses were ordered along the road, and Labédoyère was directed to ride by way of Genoa and the Riviera de Ponente, and proclaim along the coastline the last splendid achievement of the First Consul's genius.

The battle of Marengo was fought on June 14th, 1800, and on the morning of the following day young Labédoyère started for Paris. His ride, as far as Avignon, took him through some of the most splendid scenery in Europe, but he had little time to admire it. His orders were to have Napoleon's despatch published *in extenso* in Paris within nine days of his parting from the First Consul, and to communicate a summary of its contents to the proper authorities in the principal places *en route*. This involved desperately hard riding. From Genoa to

Nice the young *guide-de-camp* only paused once, except for the purpose of refreshment and changing horses and that one pause nearly cost him his life.

The shadows of evening were falling as he passed through Mentone, and before he had reached the summit of the mountain that separates Mentone from Nice, the light of day had completely vanished. A bend of the road brought him in sudden view of the sea lying far beneath him and gleaming tremulously in the light of the moon and stars. An ejaculation of delight escaped from his lips and he stopped to contemplate the scene.

His reverie was rudely and almost fatally broken. His horse took fright at something and made a violent bound, which threw its rider clean out of the saddle and over the parapet. With no worse injury than some superficial scratches, he regained the road, where he found his horse standing quietly, though still trembling from the fright.

On the morning of June 23rd, Labédoïère reached Paris. He had accomplished his long ride well within the prescribed time. As he passed Notre-Dame about eight o'clock in the morning, the door of the cathedral was open and the interior looked cool and refreshing, in striking contrast with the glare of the streets and the aching of his tired limbs. Seized by a sudden impulse to refresh himself in the coolness, and at the same time to return thanks to God for the safe accomplishment of his journey he dismounted, handed the

bridle of his horse to a bystander, and entered the church with his despatch-bag slung over his shoulder.

He was, as far as he could see, the only occupant, but after a while a priest came out of the sacristy and began to say Mass at one of the side altars. He was a venerable-looking old man, with scanty locks of white hair falling almost down to his shoulders. In figure he was tall and thin, but the most striking part of his person was his face. It was handsome and noble, but wore an expression of such hopeless yet unrepining sorrow as to impress Labédoyère with a vague feeling of mingled sympathy and terror. The old man's pensive grey eyes, too, when they turned in the direction of Labédoyère, seemed to be gazing so intently at something beyond, that the young *aid-de-camp* could not help looking instinctively behind him. But there was nothing but the empty floor and the dead wall of the cathedral. And the voice of the priest, even in the low tone in which he said Mass, had a weird, musical, pathetic wail in it. Altogether Labédoyère felt fascinated, whether by attraction or repulsion he could hardly tell.

Meanwhile, the priest, having administered the Sacrament to himself, looked round to see if there were any intending communicants present. Labédoyère was the only person in the church, and he, still under the spell of those sad grey eyes, moved, half mechanically, towards the altar, knelt down in front of the old priest, and received the Sacrament. Then, just as he was rising to return to his seat, the old man whispered in

his ear 'Young man, the soldier's calling is not favourable, in these days especially to the vocation of a Christian. All the more do I rejoice that the darts of temptation, to which a soldier's life is so perilously exposed, have thus far glanced scathless from your shield of faith and purity'

As he said this, a look of great pain flitted across the old man's face. But he continued 'I have been struck with your simple faith and unaffected devotion—qualities, alas! too rare nowadays in men of your years and calling. Is there anything I can do for you? For I should like to serve you'

Labédoyère, taken utterly aback, stammered out 'No, there is nothing' But instantly, observing the priest's disappointed look, and being unwilling to hurt his feelings, he asked 'But what do you mean? What kind of service do you speak of?

'I have the gift of foretelling future events,' said the old man. 'Is there anything you would like to know as to your future life? Any danger which timely knowledge might avert? Any obstacle in the way of legitimate desire which I might help you to remove?

Labédoyère, more for the sake of saying something than from any other cause, answered 'Well, if you can really see into the future, will you tell me how long I have to live?

All this time the old man's eyes had a fixed absent, anxious look, as if watching for some expected apparition. On hearing Labédoyère's question, he started and waved his arms violently as if repelling some advancing object, while at

the same time his face betokened extreme terror. In a moment, however, he recovered his composure and said to Labédoyère, in a slightly agitated tone of voice:

'I wish you had not asked me that question. And yet, perhaps, it is best as it is. Yes, yes; no doubt you have been sent to me for the very purpose of receiving this warning. You wish to know how long you have to live. I am commissioned to tell you that on this day twelvemonth, at midnight, you will die. And now, my son, since this is a danger which no foresight can avert, you must prepare yourself to meet it. You think me cruel'—this was in answer to a look half of terror, half of reproach, on the face of Labédoyère—'no, my son, the message you have received through me has been sent to you in love. Think how many are called suddenly out of this life without a moment's preparation. Not that I would have you suppose that sudden death is necessarily in itself an evil, or that a sure warning of the day and hour of one's death is necessarily in itself a blessing. Warning of death is a distinct disadvantage to a being on probation unless it works a fundamental change, not simply in his conduct, but in his principles and motives. The best preparation for death is diligence in the task allotted to us. Go home, therefore, my son, and remember this day twelvemonth at midnight. But in the meantime neglect not the duties of your daily life.'

The old priest then finished the service somewhat hurriedly and disappeared into the sacristy.

Labédoyère remained kneeling on the altar steps, dazed and stupefied. The disappearance of the priest recalled him to himself. He rose and moved slowly to the seat where he had left his cap and despatch-bag. Kneeling down, he buried his face in his hands and made an effort to recall his wandering thoughts and assure himself that it was not all a dream. Satisfied on that point, he next tried to persuade himself that the old priest was crazed, and had mistaken the aberration of an eccentric imagination for the inspiration of a Divine message. But there was that in the voice, look and manner of the old man which would not square with this theory something which Labédoyère felt, though he could not explain it, and of which he could not shake off the impression. He had a vivid presentiment that it would be perilous to disregard the warning so mysteriously given. After all,' he said, 'my prudent course is to assume that the doom just pronounced on me will be fulfilled. Let me see, I have a year before me. If the old man spoke truth, I need not fear death in the interval. That, at least, is some compensation. I will divide my year into two equal portions. The first half I shall devote to seeing what I can of life the life of a great city, the life of women and children, of gaiety and brightness, as well as of soldiers hacking each other to pieces for the sake of glory. But I should like to see the old priest once more. I must get his address, for he may be of use to me.'

But the old priest had left the church and Labédoyère could not discover anything about him, not even his name.

The verger said he was a stranger who had 'asked for an altar at which to say his Mass'; and no one knew whence he had come or whither he had gone.

Labédoïère rode straight to his *appartement*, not far from Notre-Dame. After breakfast and a short nap, he sallied out to arrange for the publication of Napoleon's despatch on the morrow. His next step was to resign his commission and leave the army.

The Parisians have always shown a wonderful alacrity in passing from the deepest despondency to the utmost gaiety. At this period, Paris was just emerging out of the gloom and agony of the Reign of Terror. It was but six years previously that Robespierre had closed his career on the scaffold to which he had sent so many others. But all that was forgotten in the buoyancy of spirits caused by the wonderful success of the arms of France across the Alps and beyond the Rhine. Paris was enriched by the spoils and forced contributions of the conquered. She was thus wealthy and gay and proud when Labédoïère plunged into the vortex of her pleasures. For a season he enjoyed them with all the zest of inexperienced youth. The image of the old priest soon vanished from his memory, and with it the predicted doom. Presently, however, they returned with added and tragic force.

Labédoïère, as was natural to a man of his age and susceptible temperament, had fallen in love. Whether it was natural that he should have fallen in love with a woman con-

siderably older than himself, by no means handsome, and remarkable for nothing in particular except an extremely shrewd intellect a caustic wit, a diminutive body, and a splendid head of hair, is more than I can tell. She conquered Labédoyère through his vanity of which he had a considerable bump. Within three weeks of his first meeting Mdlle Oudinet, he was as helpless in her toils as Samson in the arms of Delilah when the locks of his strength were shorn. She was the orphan daughter and only child of a worthy butcher who from humble beginnings, had amassed a large fortune by means of army contracts. Uneducated himself, he had bestowed on his daughter the best education that money could purchase. Her wealth her tact, her wit and talent for conversation had made a sort of reputation for her, and her company was sought at the tables of even the most exclusive houses. For it had become known that any party at which Mdlle Oudinet was a guest would at least not be a dull one. While enjoying her social success, she knew that the admiration which she extorted was hollow, and that the proud ladies who sought her company did so from the same motive for which they hired their cook, to make their dinners attractive. Some of them hated her cordially, for she had a rare gift for impromptu epigram, and her shafts were always barbed and found their mark. No woman offended her without paying the penalty of being made the laughing-stock of every *salon* in Paris for the next few days.

What Mdlle Oudinet wanted was not love but admiration. She was clever enough to know that her wit and brilliance could not secure till the end of the chapter the homage that was now paid her. She was only in and not of the society in which she mingled. The butcher's daughter must merge her name in that of some ancient house.

She had formed this resolution about the time she met Labédoyère. He was poor, though possessing a sufficient income for a bachelor, and he was noble. She was plebeian, but rich and sought after in society. Were they not made for each other? Paris was hankering for the pageantry of a court and there were signs that ere long its wish would be gratified. The wife of Citizen Labédoyère would then be the Marquise de Labédoyère. The young man, too, was just then one of the 'lions' of the city. His name had been mentioned more than once in despatches for conspicuous gallantry, and he was known to be a special favourite with the First Consul. Nor was he at all injured in the public estimation by the resignation of his commission. It was believed that he had a secret mission in Paris under the orders of Bonaparte, and would soon receive some important appointment. In every way young Labédoyère was a prize well worth hunting down.

Nor did the hunt last long. The inexperienced young soldier fell an easy prey to the artful flattery of a woman whom all the men admired and all the women feared. But his engagement was succeeded within a few weeks by serious mis-

givings as to the wisdom of his choice His fiancée made the mistake of imagining that a conquest so easily won could be as easily maintained. Labédoyère soon woke to the consciousness that he had foolishly allowed himself to be made the tool of a designing woman. But what was he to do? He was an honourable man, and Mdlle Oudinet took good care to give him no pretext for quarrelling with her As his coolness increased so did her devotion to him.

Aid came at last in an unexpected way The First Consul saw the blunder the Republic had made in arraying against itself all the religious sentiment of France and lost no time in permitting the churches to be opened again for the worship of God One Sunday evening Labédoyère chanced to pass the open door of a little church in a by-street in the Quartier Latin. He went in and found a crowded congregation listening with uplifted faces to an impassioned sermon by a preacher whom Labédoyère could not see from the place where he was standing but whose voice instantly arrested his attention. The preacher was finishing, and his words fixed themselves so indelibly in Labédoyère's memory that when he went home he had no difficulty in reproducing them in his diary The text was Every idle word that men shall speak they shall give account thereof in the Day of Judgment.' Nothing the preacher warned his hearers, that was spoken was ever lost, it remained imprinted on the tablets of the memory, and by it a man would one day be judged

The preacher finished, and then descended among the people to collect his alms. He was no other than the old priest of Notre-Dame. His eyes and Labédoyère's met, and as the latter bent forward to drop a coin into the bag, the priest whispered in his ear, 'Remember midnight on the twenty-third of next June.' He then passed on.

When the service was over and the congregation had dispersed, Labédoyère made his way into the vestry, where he found the old priest on the point of departure. He paused on seeing the young man, but kept his hold on the handle of the door, as if impatient to be off. After a hurried apology for his intrusion, Labédoyère begged to be permitted to call on the priest. 'I have no home,' replied the old man, 'and my time is not my own. To-day I am here, to-morrow gone; and I know not from hour to hour whether I may be sent by Him Whose unworthy servant I am. I cannot therefore make appointments, because I can never be certain of being allowed to keep them.'

Labédoyère asked that at least he might be told his name.

'I am dead to the world,' said the old man, and his voice resumed that weird wail and his eyes that distant look, which Labédoyère remembered so well before the altar of Notre-Dame. 'In religion I am known as Brother Antonio. Ask me no more questions. I have already delivered my message and I have no commission to satisfy an idle curiosity. Remember the

twenty-third of June at midnight. Time is short. Eternity is long'

And the old priest, bowing courteously, passed out, closing the door behind him.

Next day Labédoyère sought an interview with Mdlle Oudinet. A few days ago he would have welcomed any pretext for breaking off his engagement, now, with this reminder of his doom, he could tell his *fiancée* quite truthfully, that for her own sake she must be released from her engagement. She, of course, would scarcely listen to him and rallied him on the folly of believing the ravings of a crack-brained old priest. When railing failed, she tried tears but Labédoyère was inexorable and cut short the scene by abruptly taking his leave.

It was the first time that Mdlle Oudinet had found herself jilted by a man, and something in Labédoyère's manner told her that he had found her out. 'A woman either loves or hates, says the Roman proverb, there is nothing between.' With her love had been changed to hate. 'I will anticipate the priest's prediction, she told herself, 'and save Fate the trouble of fulfilling her decree on the 23rd of June.'

Accordingly, she sent a note to one of her rejected lovers, whom she had still kept dancing attendance on her, even after her engagement to Labédoyère. He was a young man of good family, shady character, broken fortune, and expensive tastes, to whom an alliance with a rich heiress was of prime importance. He had been hopeful of success until Labédoyère

crossed his path and carried off his prize. Naturally, therefore, his feelings towards his rival were far from benevolent. Equally naturally, this fact was not hidden from Mdlle Oudinet. But an even greater recommendation in her eyes was the circumstance that Picard was reputed one of the best swordsmen in Paris. It was easy to give him a version of her quarrel with Labédoyère which at once portrayed herself as an innocent victim and served to revive the hopes of her old suitor.

Picard took in the situation at a glance. If only he could get rid of his rival, his ambition would be realised. He left the lady's presence in great glee and soon found an opportunity of forcing a quarrel upon Labédoyère. A sneering insinuation at an evening party, in the other's hearing, that a lack of courage had led him to leave the army, was enough. Labédoyère also was a dexterous swordsman, but out of practice and spirits—two great disadvantages where quickness of eye and strength and suppleness of wrist are so requisite. His antagonist, on the other hand, was in daily practice and his spirits rose. Probably, however, Labédoyère's depression was of great service to him on this occasion. He had become so persuaded of the fulfilment of his doom on the twenty-third of the following June that he had come to regard his own death before that date as an impossibility. He knew of his opponent's skill of fence, though he had never witnessed it, and he had no mean opinion of his own; so, believing in his

immunity, he appeared on the ground with his head as cool as if he were sitting down to a game of chess.

Picard's head was not nearly so cool, and he made, moreover, the fatal mistake of despising his adversary. A few passes, however, showed him that he would need all his skill and nerve. In fact, they were so evenly matched that, after fighting for ten minutes without either touching the other, by mutual consent they paused to rest. On renewing the contest, they fought for some time without advantage to either side, until Picard lost patience, and attempting to pass Labédoyère's guard with a rapid thrust, his foot slipped on the dewy grass, the point of his sword flew up, and he fell heavily forward, transfixing himself on his opponent's weapon. The wound was fatal, and before Labédoyère fully realised what had happened, he was gazing horror-struck on the corpse of his foe.

Thrusting his reddened blade into the ground, he broke it, and as he did so through the stillness of the morning air a well-remembered voice uttered in low but clear tones "We shall meet at midnight on the twenty-third of next June."

The voice sent a chill to Labédoyère's heart. He rushed in the direction from which it had seemed to come. A high hedge separated the field where the duel took place from the road which, at a distance of some two hundred yards, entered a dense wood and just as Labédoyère looked over the hedge, he saw a tall, dark, slim figure, with flowing white

locks, disappearing into the wood. Hastily dressing himself, and leaving the body of his late foe with the seconds and surgeon, Labédoyère pursued the mysterious priest, but failed to overtake him—which was not surprising, since the wood was intersected by many paths and Labédoyère evidently missed the right one.

He now resolved to leave Paris and await his doom elsewhere. He would have liked to rejoin the army, but that was impossible. He had deeply offended the First Consul by retiring, and Napoleon was not the man to forgive an offence of that kind. In the end he made up his mind to go to Palermo, where he knew he would receive a warm welcome from the Marchesino San Juliano, whose acquaintance he had made in Italy, and whose father, the Marchese, had large estates on the island.

Labédoyère arrived in Palermo on a bright afternoon at the beginning of April. At the Palazzo San Juliano he found all the family out; but the servant told him that he would probably meet the Marchesino in the public gardens by the roadstead. There, among a throng of loungers, Labédoyère found his friend and his family, who greeted the young Frenchman with genuine hospitality. With them he now spent some delightful weeks, first at Palermo, and afterwards at their villa near Taormina.

About three weeks after his arrival at Taormina, Labédoyère made a solitary excursion to the marble quarries on

Monte Ziretto. Returning, he missed his way and found himself at nightfall skirting the rocky peak of Lapa. Then he knew where he was, for he could see Taormina not very far off. At that moment, however, he was startled by the sound of a shot fired close above him, while at the same time a gruff voice cried, 'Bocca a terra!' He had been in Sicily long enough to know that he must throw himself face downwards on the ground and let the brigands seize him, on pain of being instantly shot. Six guns were pointing at him from a distance of about ten yards, but since, for another month, he bore a charmed life, he disregarded the challenge and rushed down the mountain. The brigands did not fire, and he was beginning to think he had escaped them when he was thrown violently to the ground. A powerful bloodhound was standing over him, and before he could recover himself the brigands were on him and overpowered him.

For some hours they led him blindfolded over the mountains. When they unbandaged his eyes, it was quite dark and he had no idea where he was. Towards the following afternoon the band arrived with their captive at a cave which was evidently their lair and where they had tolerably comfortable quarters. They set food and wine before their prisoner who partook of them with a sharpened appetite. He was then told to write a note to the Marchese demanding a handsome ransom, on receipt of which by the brigands he would be conducted in safety to the neighbourhood of Taormina. In vain

Labédoyère explained that he had no claim whatever on the generosity of the Marchese; in vain he defied his captors to shoot him. The chief brigand told him in the blandest tones that they never shot a captive; after the ransom became due, they sent a piece of his body at intervals, while life lasted, to quicken the zeal of his family and friends. Labédoyère shuddered. Death he could face, but not piecemeal mutilation. He wrote the note to the Marchese and awaited the issue with all the stoicism at his command.

During the day the band was augmented by the arrival of four more brigands, who had been on an unsuccessful expedition in another direction. At first Labédoyère took no particular notice of the new arrivals, but presently he was conscious of being an object of curiosity to one of them, whose eyes he found steadily fixed on him whenever he looked in that direction. He had a feeling that he had seen the man before, and all at once it flashed on him that the new arrival was a Genoese soldier who had been badly wounded on the field of Arcola. Labédoyère had happened to be passing just as the wounded man was about to be thrown into a pit with the dead bodies and, finding that his pulse was still beating, had had him carried to his tent. Thanks to Labédoyère, the man recovered and was set at liberty. He now contrived to slip into his benefactor's hands a paper on which were scrawled the words 'I shall be one of your guard to-night and will help you to escape. But beware of the hound.'

So it fell out. During the afternoon the chief went off with the band, leaving two men, of whom the Genoese was one, to guard the prisoner. In the course of the night the other man fell fast asleep. The Genoese proposed to kill him, but Labédoyère would not consent. He agreed however that they should bind and gag the sleeping brigand and then make their escape.

The man was soon overpowered and the two fugitives fled. It was lucky for Labédoyère that he was not alone, as he had not the least idea which way to turn on leaving the cave. His companion, however, knew the way to Taormina, and they hurried as fast as their feet could carry them, in the hope of being beyond the reach of capture by daybreak. Whenever they came to a stream, they waded through it for a considerable distance in order to throw the hound off the scent in the event of their being pursued.

Towards daybreak they were following the course of a wide but shallow mountain stream, whose banks were covered with brushwood, when the quick ear of the Genoese caught in the distance the deep baying of the bloodhound. Quickly they waded to a rock, covered with scrub, where they hid themselves, dripping as they were. The hound was then so close that they could see the swaying of the bushes on the bank of the stream, as he made his way through them. At length he reached the spot at which they had entered the water and ran up and down the bank and plunged once or twice un-

certainly into the stream. He had lost the scent, and after a while stood still and bayed aloud his disappointment. Half an hour later the chief and four of the brigands arrived. They searched diligently both sides of the stream, passing and re-passing within a few yards of the men for whom they were searching. Fortunately it never occurred to them to visit the rock, and at last, cursing the dog, they gave up the chase. The fugitives stayed in hiding until it was quite dark and then, resuming their flight, arrived in the early morning at the Villa San Juliano.

Here Labédoyère was greeted as one risen from the dead. The Marchese had sent to his banker for the ransom money, but that was no longer necessary. The mail had arrived during Labédoyère's absence, and among his letters he found, to his surprise, one from the old priest summoning him to Paris at once.

Despite the dissuasions of his friends, he started the following day, taking the Genoese ex-brigand with him. On arrival in Paris, he went without delay to the address which the priest had given him, but found the old man had gone out of town. He had, however, left a note behind him, telling Labédoyère he would call upon him *at midnight on the twenty-third of June*. It was now the seventeenth. Labédoyère accordingly invited two of his closest friends to dine with him on the twenty-third, adding in a postscript that they would oblige him by retiring at ten o'clock.

The day arrived. At ten Labédoyère was left alone, as he thought. He sat in an armchair and began to read Pascal's *Pensées*, with occasional glances at the clock on the mantel piece opposite. Eleven struck, and he fancied that a numbness was creeping over him. Telling himself that it was only nervousness, he tried to go on reading. Half-past eleven struck and he felt his pulse, which was certainly slower than it should be. A quarter to twelve, and he closed his book and sat with his eyes fixed on the clock and a finger on his pulse. There was no doubt now it had almost stopped. A deadly chill settled on his body. Then the great clock of Notre-Dame began to toll out the hour of midnight, and as the echo of the last stroke of the hammer was dying away he fell back in his chair, half-unconscious. How long he remained in that state we know for a pair of keen eyes were earnestly watching him and before life had quite departed and while he hovered, as it were in the borderland of this world and the next, a heavy hand fell upon his shoulder, and a hollow voice, as from the tomb spoke in his ear *Awake, for I am going—to shut up the church*. Labédoyère opened his eyes slowly and saw, standing before him, key in hand, the beadle of Notre-Dame!



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## *Haunted Houses*

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EXORCISM AT ST DONAT'S CASTLE  
WHAT THE GARDENER SAW  
THREE IN A BED  
THE SIMLA BUNGALOW  
THE CARDINAL OF WAVERLEY ABBEY



## EXORCISM AT ST. DONAT'S CASTLE

The following story was sent to *Lord Halifax* by *Mr Charles G. Stirling*. During 1917 *Mr Stirling* while staying in Scotland, met a *Mr X*—, a well-known Earth-healer whose real name is divulged in the letter but is better withheld from publication. He is an unassuming man of much piety and obvious sincerity *Mr Stirling* wrote. He told me astounding tales of his experiences in exorcising haunted houses in various parts of the country. The enclosed is a literal version of what occurred at *St. Donat's Castle* *Glamorganshire*. You may rely on its being an unembroidered and precise account, as I had it from *Mr X*—'s lips.

*St. Donat's Castle* is a picturesque building on the *Glamorganshire* coast, rather over two miles west of *Llantwit Major*. The present hall dates from the sixteenth century and provided a sanctuary for *Archbishop Usher* after the ruin of the Royalist cause at *Naseby* in 1645. He was invited to take refuge there by the *Dowager Lady Stradling* of the day and the little chamber in which he lived for upwards of a year may still be seen.

FOR SOME TIME THE INHABITANTS OF ST. DONAT'S Castle had been greatly alarmed by a variety of ghostly phenomena which appeared by day as well as by night. The materialisations which occurred scared not only the servants and the children of the house, but also the owner and his wife. The situation at length became so intolerable that the owner, a retired naval officer, decided to let or sell the place, which accordingly was advertised in *Country Life*.

At this juncture, however, he happened to hear of the fame of *Mr X*— as an exorcist. *Mr X*— is a remarkable man,

born in one of the Dominions, who at the age of fourteen discovered that he possessed extraordinary powers of healing. His record of cases is amazing. He devotes his life to healing the sick and to casting out evil spirits from individuals and from haunted houses.

Informed of Mr. X—'s gifts, the owner of St. Donat's wrote to him and invited him to pay a visit to the Castle and investigate the phenomena which were giving such trouble. Mr. X— consented, and in due course arrived. He found that the principal manifestations were as follows:

- (1) A panther was repeatedly seen by the household in the corridors.
- (2) A bright light appeared nightly in one of the bedrooms, having the semblance of a large, glaring eye.
- (3) A hag of horrible appearance was seen in the armoury.
- (4) The piano, even when closed, was played by invisible hands.

Having received this account of the manifestations, Mr. X— retired to the bedroom, in which the light had been reported, to pray and grapple with the Powers of Darkness. He requested the owner of the house to sit meanwhile in the hall, with the front door wide open, while the process of exorcism went on. After a while, as though to mark Mr. X—'s triumph over the evil forces of the place, a great gust of wind suddenly blew out from the room where he was pray-

ing, swept down the main staircase and all but carried the owner of the Castle into the garden.

From that day and hour the ghostly disturbances completely ceased. All was peaceful in the Castle, which is no longer to be let or sold.



#### WHAT THE GARDENER SAW

This story was sent to *Lord Halifax* by *Mrs J Rawlinson Ford* of *Yealand Conyers Carnforth Cumberland*. She added in a postscript. Of course I could give the name of the lady and the house, but am not sure that I may. the present occupiers may not know about the ghost. The letter was written in February 1914.

A curious instance of an appearance just before or at the moment of death took place some years ago at a place about thirty miles or so from here (Carnforth)

One day the gardener at this place was at work in the garden when he happened for some reason, to turn round. To his great surprise he saw his mistress coming towards him, apparently in distress and wanting his help. His astonishment was the greater as at the time she was very ill and he believed her to be in bed. As he hurried towards her, she unaccountably disappeared, and when, in bewilderment, he went on to the house and made enquiries, he was told that she had just died in her room upstairs.

There was a sequel which may be held to explain the apparition. Years afterwards the lady's maid, on her death-

bed, confessed that she had murdered her mistress. Having discovered that the lady had left her some money in her will, she had given her poison. Thereafter the lady was supposed to haunt the house. I stayed there more than once and always felt—as people say—‘eerie’ on the staircase and landing, but not when I was in my room. On the death of my host, his wife and child left the house and it went out of the family.

Not very long ago, I was speaking to my former hostess about ghosts and asked: ‘Which was the actual room at the Hall where the lady was murdered?’ She replied that it was the one in which I had slept. Since I had never had any uncanny feeling while in it, I suppose that my discomfort on the landing and staircase must have been caused by the old pictures and furniture and the dark corners, and that the ghost of the murdered woman had nothing to do with it.



THREE IN A BED

*Three in a Bed* was evidently an old favourite with *Lord Halifax*. In the early days of his marriage, when he lived at the *Moult* in *Devonshire* he used to tell the story to his visitors with great effect. Towards the end of his life he must have found that he could not recall the details, as he seems to have written to one of the visitors of those early days and asked her to refresh his memory. In complying with his request, she reminded him, ‘how you used to make us shudder when you related the story, what particularly haunted me was the fear afterwards of touching something cold’.

A certain Dissenting minister and his wife took a large house near a town in one of the Eastern counties. After they had

been there a little while, they were disquieted to observe that, although they were not using the upper floor of the house, often when they came home at night after evening service, they used to see lights in the upper windows.

One day, an old friend came to stay with them for a few days, and since there was no other accommodation for him in the house, they put him to sleep in one of the rooms on the top floor, at the end of a passage. On the morning after the first night of his stay the visitor came down to breakfast looking very pale and harassed. He found, he told his hosts, that he had to leave at once, and although they pressed him to remain, nothing would shake his determination to depart without delay, nor although they questioned him, would he give any explanation of his sudden change of plan.

A little later on, a young couple arrived as guests. They were given the same room as the previous visitor had had. When they retired to bed there was a bright fire burning and there was nothing to disquiet them. They settled themselves for the night and soon fell asleep. Presently the man awoke with a start and a strong feeling that he was lying between two people. So certain was he of this that he dared not put out his hand on the side opposite to that on which his wife was lying. Instead, very cautiously he roused his wife, and persuaded her to get out of the bed on the far side. He followed her and then, looking back, they both distinctly saw, by the light of the fire, the bedclothes heaped up, as it were, round a human form which lay in the bed.

As they stared, they heard footsteps coming slowly and softly down the passage outside. They reached the door and stopped. After a moment's pause, the brass handle turned and the door, which had been locked, swung gently open. The unfortunate couple hid their eyes in terror, so they saw nothing of what immediately followed. But they heard the footsteps pad softly across the room. There was silence, and then a dreadful gurgle, and looking at the bed once more, they saw the clothes twitched suddenly right off it on to the floor. Once more the footsteps retreated to the door and died away down the passage.

The rest of the night was spent in fear and watchfulness; and when, next morning, the maid arrived with their hot water, the door was still locked. Coming down to breakfast in great agitation, they told their experience to their host, who wrote off at once to his previous visitor. In his reply, the latter admitted that he had had a precisely similar experience. No explanation of any kind was forthcoming, and, needless to say, the house was given up.



#### THE SIMLA BUNGALOW

The story of *The Simla Bungalow* was sent to *Lord Halifax* in 1925 by his sister, *Mrs Dundas*, who had had it from her granddaughter in *India*

The other day, while I was staying with friends at Simla, I met a very charming Mrs. Giles. She had been a Miss For-

dyce, and before her marriage had lived up there with her mother and stepfather, in a house now occupied by an American doctor. It was an old building and after a little while they began to have complaints of nocturnal disturbances. Two of their guests a man and a girl, reported that the most extraordinary noises had prevented them from sleeping, and although Miss Fordyce assured them that what they had heard must have been rats scampering about, they were quite unconvinced by the explanation and continued to be very much upset.

A little while afterwards, Miss Fordyce and her mother who was not at all well at the time, were alone in the house. One night Miss Fordyce was awakened by the agonized whimpers of her fox terrier, which always slept near her bed. The dog jumped up on to the eiderdown and seemed to be trying in terror to crawl under it. Miss Fordyce always kept a light burning and she sat up in bed at once and looked round to try to see what could have frightened her dog. The room, as is quite usual in India, was an inner one with a dressing-room leading out of it. The dressing-room door was open, and looking through it she saw standing on the step in the outer doorway an old man leaning upon a stick and staring at the floor. As she looked, he vanished. Curiously enough, in spite of this alarm, she was able to lie down quite calmly and go to sleep again.

Next day, however thinking over her adventure, she felt

very frightened. Owing to her mother's illness, she did not like to tell her what she had seen, and felt obliged to continue sleeping in the room. But the fox-terrier would never enter it alone again, and if it happened to get shut in there, would howl terribly until released.

Long afterwards, when she was at a luncheon party, Miss Fordyce found herself sitting next to a young man who told her that his parents had once lived in that identical house and that it was haunted. He was also able to explain the haunting. An old man, he said, had once lived in the house with a young wife, and one night, in a fit of jealousy, he had murdered her. Many people had heard noises; some had even seen the ghost of the young wife running along the covered verandah crying; but as far as is known, Miss Fordyce is the only person who ever saw the old man.



#### THE CARDINAL AT WAVERLEY ABBEY

*Waverley Abbey* is close to the *River Wey*, about three miles from *Farnham*. Founded in 1128, it was the first Cistercian establishment in *England*, though little of the original buildings now remain. The 'Cardinal' of the story may have been *Peter de Rupibus*, the famous *Bishop of Winchester*, of whom it is recorded that his heart and bowels were buried in the Abbey church, while the rest of his body lies in *Winchester Cathedral*. What was supposed to be his heart was discovered in 1731, within two leaden dishes soldered together, its subsequent fate is unknown.

The following story was sent to *Lord Halifax* in 1925 by *Mrs Anderson*, the owner of *Waverley Abbey*.

Mrs. Dundas<sup>1</sup> left us this morning. She has been staying with us for the last week and made me promise to write you the following little story of what occurred here during the War when our house was turned into a hospital for wounded men.

We had beds here for two hundred and fifty wounded. The Bishop of Winchester, Dr. Talbot, was our chaplain, a Father Robo looked after the Roman Catholics, and the Dissenting Minister from Farnham attended to the Nonconformists. I always made a point of sending the Roman Catholics in to the church at Farnham for Mass, but the little room that used to be my sitting-room was also turned into a chapel for the use of those who were unable to make the journey. Father Robo could come here as often as he liked. He always had lunch with us in the Staff Room and we became great friends.

One Easter he told me that he wanted to have High Mass in my little sitting-room. This had never previously been allowed in a house belonging to Church of England people, but he had obtained permission for the service from the Pope, in recognition of what we had done for the Roman Catholic wounded.

It had always been supposed that the Abbey was haunted by the ghost of a Cardinal, whom some declared they had seen walking about the place. He was one of those who had

<sup>1</sup>Lord Halifax's sister

been buried in the old Cistercian building and should have been prayed for in perpetuity. He frequently appeared in the large drawing-room, where we had eighteen beds for the wounded. They and the nurses continually saw him; and this happened when they were all together, so that the apparition could not be explained away as proceeding from the imagination of a single person. The general belief was that the Abbey was under a curse, as having been the property of the Church and stolen from her.

The priest had invited me to be at Mass that Easter morning and consequently I heard the address which he gave to the men after it was over. He told them that he had had a message from the Pope through the Archbishop of Westminster (Cardinal Bourne). His Holiness had sent word that, in appreciation for what we had done for his flock, he had removed the curse from Waverley Abbey; that we were to pray for the Cardinal, which thereupon we did, after which his soul would rest in peace. This happened seven or eight years ago, and since that day the Cardinal has not been seen again.

I was in Rome last April. The present Pope knows all about the story and graciously sent for me to have an audience with him, which I much appreciated.

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*Ghostly  
Guardians*

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SOMEONE BY HIS SIDE  
BISHOP KING & ESCAPE

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SOMEONE BY HIS SIDE  
BISHOP KING'S ESCAPE



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## HOSTLY GUARDIANS

### SOMEONE BY HIS SIDE

Mrs. Ford of Carnforth had this story from her mother-in-law

ONE STORMY NIGHT A MAN, KNOWN TO BE OF GREAT help to those who were distressed in body or mind was startled by a loud ring at his bell. Going to the door, he found a messenger from an invalid living some miles off who was in grave trouble and begged for this man to go and see him (I have forgotten the invalid's name and am not sure whether or not he was a relation.)

The first man dismissed the messenger, saying he would go as soon as he could. As he was starting off, he hesitated and even thought of giving up the journey. It was a terrible night, and the storm had increased to such a pitch that there was a risk of his lantern light being blown out. However he went. What with the intense darkness and the wind and rain, he had some difficulty in walking along but presently he had a curious feeling as of someone by his side. He could neither see nor hear anyone, but the sensation that he had a companion was extremely strong and continued until he arrived at his destination, where he stayed for some time.

On his way home the storm was as bad as ever, but he again had the feeling of being accompanied. Yet, mysterious and unaccountable as it was, he was not in the least afraid.

Many years afterwards, he had a request one day to visit a

prison where a man was condemned to be hanged. He was not surprised at receiving such a message, as he often called at that particular prison to bring comfort and help to its inmates. He found the man who had sent for him, and the prisoner said that he did not wish to die with any crime unconfessed, whether or not it had been actually carried out. 'Do you remember', he asked, 'walking along a dark lonely road in a storm several years ago?' The visitor replied that he did. 'I knew you had been sent for to a dying person,' the prisoner went on, 'and that you always wore a valuable watch and might have money on you. I lurked under a hedge prepared to attack and rob you, but as you walked along, someone else was walking with you, so I waited for your return. But when you came back, the person was still there, walking by your side, and I did not dare to attack two people.'



BISHOP KING'S ESCAPE

The story of the escape of *Edward King, Bishop of Lincoln*, was sent to the present *Lord Halifax* by *Miss A. E. Nash*. It is so similar to the preceding tale that very possibly it refers to the same incident. The *Bishop* told his story at tea one day to *Canon Perry*, his daughters and *Miss Nash's* sister.

I do not know if you ever heard of our dear *Bishop King* of *Lincoln's* experience. He told it to *Canon Perry*, when my sister was staying with him and the *Bishop* came to tea, as at that time he often did in order to consult him on *Canon Law*,

when those creatures were prosecuting him.<sup>1</sup> When the Bishop was a young man, he was curate in a village. One wet cold night he had come home very tired and had just got his boots off, when his landlady came in and said that a farmer, living three miles off across the fields, had met with a serious accident and wanted King to come at once. She did not know the messenger, and he refused to come in because he was so wet. King put his boots on again and started off, but it was very dark and he missed the man who had brought the message. When he reached the house to which he had been summoned, the door was opened to his knock by the farmer himself, hale, hearty, and much surprised to see his visitor. No message had been sent, and, greatly mystified, King went home. The man who had summoned him had gone, and the matter remained unexplained.

Some years afterwards, in another county, King was ministering to a dying man in hospital, and the man said 'Don't you remember me, Sir? The Bishop could not recall him until he gave his name, which was that of a very bad character who had lived years ago in that village where King was a curate. The man went on. It was lucky for you that you brought a friend with you that night when you thought you had a call to the farm. I meant to murder you, only I couldn't, as there were two of you.' The Bishop had seen and heard nothing but the man was certain that he had been

<sup>1</sup>The famous trial of Bishop King before Archbishop Benson in 1890.

accompanied by a second great-coated figure walking beside him.

A similar occurrence was told me by a young priest who was working in a mining district in Canada. He had to go a long ride through thickly wooded country. He did not relish the job, as there were plenty of undesirable characters about, but duty called and he went, returning in perfect safety. Some little while afterwards he was called to see a dying man in hospital, who told him that he and a 'pal' had been so furious with him for his interference with their doings that they had determined to kill him. Knowing of his journey, they had lain in wait for him in the loneliest part of the way, but, to their great annoyance, two other men were riding, one on each side of their proposed victim, so that they could not get a shot at him. Like Bishop King, the priest thought that he was alone.

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## *Two Friends*

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**Q**This story was told to *Lord Halifax* by his friend, *Mr Augustus Hare*, author of *Memorials of a Quiet Life*. *Mr Hare* claimed to have had it from *Lady Blomfield*, who in her turn had heard it directly from the man to whom the experience happened, but who did not wish his name to be disclosed.



TWO BOYS AT A PUBLIC SCHOOL WERE ABSOLUTELY devoted to each other. They did everything together and in the manner of boys swore eternal friendship. In order to seal this promise, each made a cut in the other's arm and signed a paper in blood to the effect that which ever of them should die first would appear to his friend at the moment of death.

The boys spent all their holidays together, and great was their despair when their schooldays ended and young B—— who was to be called to the Bar, went up to the University, while his friend, who was going into the Indian Army, was sent elsewhere to undergo his military training.

Of course, they promised faithfully to write to each other, and indeed began by writing twice a day, but presently twice became once, and once a day became twice a week. After the young soldier had gone to India, the correspondence further languished until at last it ceased altogether. The old friendship died. B—— became an eminent barrister in London, his friend pursued his Indian career, and for many years they held no communication with each other.

On a certain Saturday, just before Christmas, B——, who had been overworking and felt that he wanted a little country air, resolved to run down to Virginia Water for the Sunday. On arrival there, he put up at the Wheatsheaf, and after dinner sat over the fire in the entrance hall smoking his pipe. As he

sat, a curious uneasiness came over him. He felt restless. Then he fancied he saw a face looking in at the window, and what vaguely troubled him was that he seemed to know the face, yet could not put a name to its owner.

At length, on the pretence of re-lighting his pipe at the gas bracket, he got up and walked slowly past the window. Undoubtedly there was someone there; undoubtedly, too, the face was familiar. But who was it? He could not remember, and, a good deal disturbed, he went past the window a second time. Then the truth flashed upon him: it was not the face of the boy he had known at school, but was, as it were, the development of that face into that of the man he would probably have become.

A little uncertain whether what he had seen was real or not, he sent for the landlord of the Wheatsheaf and told him, 'There's a man looking in at the window.' The landlord went to see, but came back shaking his head. 'Oh no, sir, there's no one there. The yard gate is locked at ten o'clock and nobody can get in at this time of night.' B—, however, was not satisfied. He was sure that he had seen something, though of what it was he was not sure. At any rate he could not leave the puzzle unsolved. 'I must go,' he told the landlord, 'and get a breath of fresh air.' 'Better not, sir,' replied the man. 'There's an east wind blowing fit to cut you to pieces.' 'I can't help that,' said B—. 'I am stifling. Go out I must.'

The Wheatsheaf Inn lies close to the edge of Virginia Water, and as B—— stood at the door of the inn he looked out into what seemed to be impenetrable darkness. Gradually, however, as he gazed, the darkness appeared to concentrate and gather itself together, until it was focused upon one spot, as it were the mouth of a tunnel, and out of this tunnel came a lighted train. The picture grew clearer. In one of the middle carriages B—— saw two men apparently engaged in a deadly conflict, one forcing the other back towards the door of the carriage. All at once the door fell open and the man underneath the other fell out, face upwards, at B——'s feet. It was the face he had seen a few minutes before looking in at the window of the inn, the face of the man into whom the friend of his boyhood had grown. Then, in a moment, train and tunnel and face all vanished, and B—— was alone in the darkness.

With a cry of horror he staggered back into the hall of the inn. 'I am ill!' he cried to the landlord. 'I don't know what is the matter but I have been seeing visions—terrible sights. I must get home at once, I cannot be laid up here. I must go back to London this very night.'

Fortunately there was a last train which he could catch, and so he got to his London house, went to bed tired out, slept soundly and awoke next morning completely recovered. His vision of the previous night ceased to trouble him—the change of air he thought, had after all done him good, and some

interesting work was awaiting him, so that he was kept occupied most of the day.

Going for a stroll late in the afternoon, he was in Piccadilly when he saw, on the other side of the street, the brother of his former school friend, a man with whom he had a slight acquaintance. This encounter brought back to him, with a sense of shock, his vision of the night before, and he hurriedly crossed the road and greeted the man. 'What news have you had of Willie?' he asked. The other looked very grave and sad. 'Bad,' he replied, 'very bad, I am afraid.' 'He is dead?' 'Yes.' 'Was he killed?' B—— asked excitedly. 'Thrown out of a railway carriage?' 'Yes, he was,' said the brother, profoundly astonished. 'But how on earth have you heard? We only got the telegram this morning.'

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*Dreams and  
Portents*

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THE SPANISH KNIFE  
TURN TO THE RIGHT!  
PRESIDENT LINCOLN'S DREAM  
JOHN ARTHINGTON'S ESCAPE  
TWO SUBMARINES  
THE FIGHTING ROOKS AND THE BLACK MOUSE  
LORD DECIES RING  
THE DEATH OF LORD HASTINGS



THE SPANISH KNIFE

The *Rt. Hon. A. Beresford Hope* who told *Lord Halifax* this story was a well known member of Parliament and Anglo-Catholic. The *Lord Waterford* referred to was probably the 3rd Marquess. A footnote adds that the story is referred to in the record of the Limerick Jury

LORD WATERFORD, HIS GAMEKEEPER, AND THE MAN who kept the local inn were one day in the church at Curraghmore. The gamekeeper reported that a man had been found murdered in the mountains' 'It must be the little one, the innkeeper at once and unaccountably exclaimed. He went on to explain his remark by telling the other two of a dream he had lately had. In it two men, one big and one little, had come to his inn, and he had seen the big man kill the little man by stabbing him with a knife of a kind he had never seen before

In the morning the innkeeper had told this dream to his wife, and in the course of the day, sure enough two men, one big and the other little, had arrived at his house. So vivid was the impression of his dream that he refused to admit the men, but later his wife, unwilling to lose their custom, had let them in by the back door. Some little while afterwards, when he was taking some refreshments into the room in which the men were seated, he had noticed lying on the table a knife of peculiar and outlandish shape, such as he had seen in his dream. Presently the men had paid their bill and taken their departure

The body of the man who had been found murdered in the mountains was brought in. It was, as the innkeeper had surmised, the smaller of his two visitors; and he had been stabbed to death. A description of the murderer was published and circulated round the country, a strict watch being set in particular on the bridge at Carrick, which was the most likely point at which the wanted man would try to cross the river Shannon; and there he was eventually caught and arrested. On investigation, it transpired that he and his companion had been employed in the cod fisheries off Newfoundland. In his possession was a Spanish knife. It was of a very peculiar make, such as was quite unknown in Ireland, and there was no doubt whatever that it had caused the wound in the body of the murdered man.



‘TURN TO THE RIGHT’

A man once had a vivid dream in which he was travelling in a wild and unfrequented part of the Black Forest. Two ruffians suddenly emerged from the trees and attacked him; he fled for his life and they pursued him. After a while he came to a point where the road forked, and while he was desperately wondering which of the two arms was the more likely to bring him to safety, and the robbers were coming up behind him, he heard a voice close to his ear, which told him, ‘Turn to the right!’ He did as he was told, and quite soon he came

to a lonely house, which turned out to be an inn, where he was taken in and was safe from pursuit.

Twenty years passed and he had almost forgotten his dream, when he chanced to be travelling in Germany and passing through the Black Forest. Just as had happened in the dream, two robbers sprang out on him and attacked him, and again as in the dream, he came in his flight to a fork in the road. He could hear the robbers in hot pursuit and was undecided which of the two tracks to choose when, in a flash, his dream came back to him. He turned to the right, and soon found safety in the inn.



#### PRESIDENT LINCOLN'S DREAM

The story of President *Lincoln's* dream on the night preceding his murder is well known. Gideon Welles, one of the members of his Cabinet, has left on record his recollection of what the President told his colleagues.

He [*Lincoln*] said it was in my department, that it related to the water that he seemed to be in a singular and indescribable vessel, but always the same, and that he was moving with great rapidity toward a dark and indefinite shore that he had had this singular dream preceding the firing on *Sussex* the battles of *Bull Run*, *Antietam*, *Gettysburg*, *Stone River*, *Vicksburg*, *Wilmington*, etc. Victory did not always follow his dream, and the events and results were important.

The version in the *Ghost Book* is more detailed and dramatic. How *Lord Halifax* obtained it he does not divulge.

Several years ago Mr Charles Dickens, as we know, went on a tour to America. Among other places he visited Washington, where he called upon his friend the late Mr Charles

Sumner, the well-known senator who was present at Lincoln's deathbed. After talking of various matters, Mr. Sumner said to Dickens: 'I hope that you have seen everybody and everything that you wanted to see, that there is no wish unfulfilled.'

'Well,' replied Dickens, 'there is one person whose acquaintance I greatly wish to make, and that is Mr. Stanton.'

'Oh, that is very easily managed,' Sumner assured him. 'Mr. Stanton is a great friend of mine. Come and meet him here.'

So it was arranged, and much conversation passed. Towards midnight, before the three men separated, Stanton turned to Sumner and said: 'I should like to tell Mr. Dickens that story about the President.'

'Well,' said Sumner, 'the time is very suitable.'

Stanton proceeded as follows:

'During the war, as you know, I was in charge of all the troops in Columbia, and as you may imagine, I had my hands pretty full. One day there was a council ordered for two o'clock, but I was pressed with business and could not get there till twenty minutes past. When I entered, most of my colleagues were looking rather grave, but I thought nothing of that, nor of the words that fell from the President as I entered: "But, gentlemen, this is not business; here is Mr. Stanton." Business proceeded and various matters were discussed and settled. When the Council broke up, I walked away arm in arm with the Attorney General, saying to him as we left: "Well, we have really done some work to-day. The

President applied himself to business, instead of flitting about from one chair to another talking to this and that man.' 'Ah,' said the Attorney General, "but you were not here at the beginning you do not know what passed." "What did pass?" I asked. 'When we entered the Council Chamber to-day resumed the Attorney General, "we found the President seated at the top of the table with his face buried between his hands. Presently he raised it, and we saw that he looked grave and worn. He said 'Gentlemen, before long you will have important news.' We all enquired 'What, sir, have you had bad news? Is it anything serious?' He replied 'I have heard nothing. I have had no news, but you will hear to-morrow.' We again pressed him to tell us what had happened, and at last he said, 'I have had a dream. I have dreamt that dream three times—once before the battle of Bull Run, once on another occasion, and again last night. I am in a boat, alone—on a boundless ocean. I have no oars—no rudder—I am helpless. I drift! I drift!! I drift!!!'"

Five hours afterwards the President was assassinated



#### JOHN ARTHINGTON'S ESCAPE

This story was sent to *Lord Halifax* by *Mrs Ford* of *Camforth*

The following is the story as I remember it being told to me by my mother in-law *Mrs Ford*

Among the many family stories which my grandmother Whitelock used to tell, I have more than once heard her relate

how the life of her uncle, John Arthington, was saved by a dream. He had to take a journey to some place which he had never visited and by a road unknown to him. As he rode along on horseback, it struck him that the way was familiar, a thing which puzzled him considerably. At last he came in sight of a ferry-house, at the door of which stood a man looking out for passengers. Instantly it flashed across John Arthington's mind that a few nights before he had dreamed the whole scene, and that in his dream he had got into the ferry boat, that it had sunk, and that he had been drowned. He was so strongly impressed by this memory that he asked the owner of the boat if there were no other way of crossing the river. The man replied that there was a bridge two miles further up, but people generally preferred to cross by the boat.

John Arthington, however, said he would ride forward to the bridge and did so. On his return journey, which he also made by way of the bridge, the man at the ferry-house stopped him to say that it was very fortunate for him that he had chosen the bridge, for when the boat reached the middle of the river, it had turned over and all on board had been drowned.



TWO SUBMARINES

The following story, though written in the third person, was apparently sent to *Lord Halifax* by *Ruth, Countess of Chichester*

During the War, an old nurse who came down from Scotland to visit Lady Chichester, told her that one night recently

she had had a dream about the Forth Bridge and that in the dream she had seen what she described as whales, with castles on their backs circling round the third pillar of the Bridge. On the following night exactly the same dream had occurred again. So impressed was she by the dream and its recurrence that she wrote to her nephew, who was employed at the time in work on the Bridge, told him of her experience, and asked him if he thought it had any meaning.

In due course, the nephew replied 'What you saw, he wrote, is not whales with castles on their backs, but submarines with their periscopes showing above the water. He told her that at the time when her letter arrived, they were engaged in protecting the Bridge against submarine attack, by surrounding the pillars with concrete, against which the shock of a torpedo would spend itself. Every pillar had been so protected, except the third pillar, work on which was only half completed. The nephew had accordingly shown his aunt's letter to his foreman a shrewd old Scot, who was sure that something was intended by it, remarking at once, 'We had better take measures to make everything safe.'

Some of the men were kept back and, by working day and night, finished concreting the third pillar. At the same time a hint of some sort was passed to the naval authorities that submarine attacks were to be expected.

On the day after the Bridge was made safe, two German

submarines actually appeared in the Forth and attacked the Bridge. They were unable to do any damage and one of them was eventually taken.



THE FIGHTING ROOKS AND THE BLACK MOUSE

The following stories were sent to *Lord Halifax* in 1880 by his uncle, the *Rev the Hon Francis R. Grey*, son of *Lord Grey* of the Reform Bill and for many years *Rector of Morpeth*

A former curate of mine, F. Howson, is spending this week with us. Last year he was one of the curates at All Saints', Margaret Street, and is now with Chadwick at St. Michael's, Wakefield. Yesterday he told us two stories, for the truth of which he vouches.

Some time ago, before there was telegraphic communication with India, a lady was sitting one spring day in her garden in the Isle of Wight, when she saw a duel in the air between two rooks, one of which fell bleeding at her feet, so that her white gown was sprinkled with blood. She got up in great alarm, declaring that she was certain she would shortly hear bad news of her only son, who was in India. She forthwith retired to her room, where she wrote on the window shutter the date, day and hour of her experience. The days passed, the poor woman awaiting in great anxiety the arrival of the Indian mail. When at last it came, it brought her a letter announcing that her son had been killed in a duel. When dates and times were compared, it was found that he had met his death on the

THE FIGHTING ROOKS and the BLACK MOUSE

very day and at the very hour when his mother had witnessed the duel between the rooks

The other story is of a clergyman attending the deathbed of a man who had led a very evil life. In company with the wife of the dying man, the clergyman was watching by the bed, when a jet black mouse crept on to the counterpane. They tried to frighten it away, but there it remained, they tried to catch it, but it always evaded them. In spite of all they could do the mouse stayed on the counterpane until the man died, when it disappeared as suddenly as it had come.

The dead man left behind him a son whose life was as wicked as his father's had been. When, some years after his father's death the young man too was dying, it happened that the same clergyman was watching by the bed with the mother. Once more the black mouse appeared, could not be dislodged, stayed until the young man was dead, and then disappeared.

I think Howson told me he had had this story from the clergyman who was at both deathbeds.



LORD DECIES RING

*Mr Beresford Hope* (see p. 97) told *Lord Halifax* this story on the occasion of the latter's visit to him at Bedgebury in December 1874. *Mr Beresford Hope* had had the tale from his uncle, *Lord Decies*.

Some years ago, while travelling on the Continent, *Lord Decies* had come across a *Mr Lionel Ashley*, son of the

sixth Earl of Shaftesbury. Mr. Ashley appeared to be very much out at elbows, but was wearing a peculiar ring with a skull and crossbones engraved upon it. On Lord Decies showing some curiosity about the ring, Mr. Ashley told him that it had been given to him by a celebrated French mesmerist and conjuror. The same man had given a similar ring to two or three other men, predicting in each case that the man would die before he was twenty-five. All the other men to whom rings had been given had duly died in accordance with the prediction. Ashley alone remained, but he was only twenty-two at the time. Having told his story, he presented Lord Decies with the ring, and during the next few weeks the two men met constantly. Some little while later, Lord Decies was sitting in his room—Mr. Beresford Hope did not say where—when Ashley appeared. Lord Decies would never disclose what actually passed between him and his visitor, but presently rang the bell. He was alone in the room when the servant arrived, and he asked him if he had let Mr. Ashley in. ‘Mr. Ashley, my lord!’ replied the servant. ‘Mr. Ashley died yesterday!’ The young man was twenty-three at his death.

Lord Decies always wore the ring he had been given by Ashley and told his nephew the story of it more than once.

## THE DEATH OF LORD HASTINGS

### THE DEATH OF LORD HASTINGS

A note explains that *Aunt Maria* sent me Miss Copley's account of Lord Hastings' ghost story. *Aunt Maria* was the wife of Henry 3rd Earl Grey. The Lord Hastings of the story was the 4th and last Marquess of Hastings, the notorious gambler who lost £120 000 over *Hermit's Derby*. He died in the following year overwhelmed with debts.

It appears that Lord Hastings, before starting in his yacht for Norway, was entertaining at Donington a party of men, of whom Colonel Gordon, son of Lady Francis was one. After dinner one evening, Lord Hastings suddenly got up from the table and rang the bell. When the servant came, he said, 'Go and find out who has called at this time of night. I heard a carriage drive up to the door.'

After some time had elapsed the servant returned and reported that there must have been a mistake, as no one had called and there was no trace of wheels on the drive outside.

Lord Hastings was apparently satisfied, but a few minutes later he jumped up again and rang the bell. 'I have heard another carriage drive up,' he told the servant on arrival. 'Go and find out what it means and who it is.'

This time the servant was absent for still longer. When he returned, he said, 'My lord, I have been round to the stables and everywhere. There is no sign of any carriage and no one has called.' Whereupon Lord Hastings threw up his hands.

and exclaimed, 'Then I am a dead man before the end of the year.'

His companions at table thought his conduct very strange, some of them supposing that their host must have drunk too much. Noticing their surprise, Lord Hastings explained his conduct. There was, he told them, a tradition that when the head of the Hastings family, sitting at his table, twice heard a non-existent carriage drive up to the front door of the house, he would die before the end of the year.

Next day, Colonel Gordon wrote to his mother. At the end of his letter, he asked, 'By the bye, is there any legend attached to the Hastings family?' He was careful to give no indication that he was referring to any particular incident that had happened. Lady Francis replied by return of post: 'You ask about a legend in the Hastings family. Surely you must have heard that when the head of the house, sitting at his own table, twice hears a carriage drive up to the door, and no carriage is there, he will die before the end of the year.'

I have told the story [added Miss Copley] as I heard it from C. Walrond, only I am not sure whether the carriage was to be heard by the head of the house only, or if the other guests, without knowing the story, also shared the delusion. If they heard nothing, it is possible that Lord Hastings was drunk, or if sober, was suffering from a bad conscience. When I told the story the other day, someone who was

THE DEATH *of* LORD HASTINGS

present and already knew about it, added the information that Lord Hastings had taken a bet about his death. With whom? I asked. With a friend—that he would not be dead. And he cannot lose. If he lives he wins and if he dies, he can't pay nor need his successor, since debts of honour are not transferable. I can believe anything of him. The legend certainly exists. The scene in the dining-room at Donington certainly occurred. There are still four and a half months before the 1st of January, 1869.

Lord Hastings died on November 10th, 1868



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*The Rustling  
Lady of Lincoln  
and other stories*

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**¶** Miss Nash, a lady in India, sent the following stories to the present Lord Halifax



MY GRANDFATHERS EACH HAD A PROPHETIC DREAM My father's father, Dr Nash (one of those whom Dean Church in his book on the Oxford Movement calls the precursors of that revival) had been in Scotland and intended to start on his return journey by coach, of course, on the following day. During the night he dreamed that the coach capsized and that all the outside passengers (of whom he meant to be one) were killed. So vivid was the dream that he put off his journey. The coach was wrecked and all the outside passengers were killed.

My mother's father after leaving school, was offered by the father of a schoolfellow a clerkship in the Linen Hall in Dublin. He accepted it, to the indignation of his own father, who probably wanted him to sit down and bemoan the folly of his grandfather in running through his property and leaving his family a paltry two hundred pounds a year on which to live. One night, my grandfather dreamed that he was sent to the bank for money (a duty which, as he was a junior clerk, he had never been given before), and that while he was there a man came in and presented a cheque, the signature on which he knew in his dream to be forged. He whispered his information to the cashier, the man was detained and the forgery was discovered. Next day, all happened as in the dream. The young clerk was sent to the bank, the man came

in with a cheque; and he presented it to the cashier next to my grandfather. Almost involuntarily the latter whispered the information that the signature had been forged; and so it turned out to have been, my grandfather gaining much kudos. But he used to say that he would never forget the terror which swept over him when he realised that, on the flimsy evidence of a dream, he had brought a serious charge against a complete stranger.

★      ★      ★      ★

My father was for ten years in Western Australia, where at one time he was looking after his brother's station up-country. Mr. X., a settler in the district, who had been doing well, often spoke of going home for a holiday; so that no one was surprised when another friend, riding over to see X., was told by the overseer that he had gone for two years, leaving him in charge. Shortly afterwards, however, this same friend happened to pass by again and was greatly astonished to see X. sitting on a fence. 'Hullo, X.,' he called out, 'I thought you had gone home.' The other made no reply, but got down from the fence, walked a short distance away, and apparently vanished. The friend, after discussing this experience with some of the neighbours, returned to the place with some native trackers, who examined the place and reported, 'White man's brains.' They then followed the tracks to the spot where X. had disappeared and said, 'Dies'. A little below the surface of the ground, the body of Mr. X. was found. The overseer was

arrested, and, of course, everyone, including my father and my uncle Richard, went to the trial. At first the man protested his innocence, but when the story of the appearance of X. and the finding of the body was related, he confessed in open court. He said he thought he would have two years in which to feather his nest and before he need disappear. Both my father and my uncle were present when the murderer confessed, and this is their account.

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Canon Charles Gray of Retford and Blythe (Notts) told us that his brother, who was solicitor to the York Chapter once lived in an old house in the Close. He had a small son, and soon after they had moved into their house, the child began to talk of 'my old gentleman' who visited him in the nursery when no one else was there. At first they thought he was imagining or dreaming but he was so sure of what he had seen that the father after getting from the child as well as he could a description of the old man, went to the Cathedral library to enquire into the history of the house. He found that it had once been inhabited by the uncle of Laurence Sterne, and a portrait in the library showed him dressed just as the child had described.

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At one time we lived in Lincoln. My Uncle Perry was at Waddington, four miles away, on Lincoln Cliff. He married my mother's sister and wrote a *Students Church His-*

tory and other books. Four miles further along the Cliff was Harmston; and I remember as a child, when staying at Waddington, going for a walk to Harmston Hall and thinking what a desolate place it looked. The owner, a crony, I think, of George IV, had fled the country for some unknown reason, and the place was in Chancery. Some years later, when we went to Lincoln, I used to go out once a week to Waddington to study Latin and early English with Uncle Perry. One day, he told me that long ago he had been over to Harmston as a witness, I think, when officials opened the room which had been locked by the wicked squire when he fled thirty years before. Nothing much had been done while he lived abroad, and Uncle Perry said the room looked as if the guests had suddenly jumped up from the table: chairs had been knocked over, glasses were lying on the floor, there were mouldy, dusty remains of food, all as if something frightening had happened. The story was that the squire suddenly informed the company that his wife had run away with his best friend, sent them all off, locked up the room, and went abroad the next day. Uncle Perry, however, said it looked more as though something dreadful had caused their flight. However it may have been, neither friend nor wife was ever heard of again.

My sister had started a school in Lincoln, and I, being just trained, and about to be given the headship of a High School, had to give up everything and join the others in Lincoln

While we were there, two of the boarders, nice girls, daughters of a gentleman farmer living at Harmston, once asked M—— and me to come out to tea in the holidays. We went for a long afternoon and found they were living in Harmston Hall, as the farmer was farming the land. The mother told us that the house was haunted, though she had had no idea of it when she went there. The first night, just when the clock in the hall struck eleven, she heard a loud shriek of terror and someone rushed down the passage and fell against the door. She thought one of the children had been frightened by a dream in the strange house and ran to the door and opened it but there was no one there. Every night as eleven struck the same thing happened and she got quite used to it. I, thinking of old stories, asked, Why did they not raise the hearthstone of that room? It seems they never thought of doing that and anyhow it had all happened years before. Perhaps the wife and friend of the old squire were murdered and buried under the hearthstone of the locked room. The old squire's son came back and lived and died in a Waddington cottage, regarded as uncanny by people, I believe. Several persons tried to live in the Hall, but it was never long before they left. One manufacturer made a good many alterations to the house, but his wife went out of her mind and they departed. At last the old owner died and the place was sold to a Lincoln ironfounder. I do not know how he got on or if there were any more appearances.



My sister had been told that the house she had taken in Lincoln was haunted, but none of us nor of the servants knew this till after we had left. It was built in 1107 and the lower part was Roman brickwork, roughly L-shaped, a lovely place. My mother turned a small room, entered by two steps down, into a bathroom. There was a long corridor leading to the panelled drawing-room. A passage ran west, passing one bedroom and, on the other side, the bathroom, and ending in a large bedroom with a powdering closet off it. Beyond it was a small room in which I slept, and a flight of stairs went up to the servants' bedroom and down to the oldest part, where M—, my eldest sister, was sleeping. Soon after we had moved in, N—, the youngest of us, said to me, 'Alice, I wish you would sit on the bathroom steps and talk to me when I'm there' (She and I took our baths at night) We laughed, but I did as she asked. One night in the holidays I was in the bathroom and everyone else was in bed, when I heard someone with rustling skirts run past the bathroom door and into the end bedroom. As soon as I could get out, I went into the room, but no one was there. One of us always stayed with my mother, who was over seventy, and one day when I was at home with her and the others were all out, she sent me to shut the windows as it was beginning to rain. My own room was the furthest off, and while I was in there, close beside me and quite plainly, I heard a deep sigh. That was not the only occasion on which I had heard things, and after we

had left the house, N—— confessed that she had asked me to sit on the bathroom steps and talk because, when she was having a bath the rustling lady would be about. She said she had seen the lady three times, twice going into a bedroom and once into the powdering closet. Once she had chased her into the bedroom, thinking it was the new charwoman going the wrong way, but when the lady reached the other door she vanished. My mother and my other sister saw nothing and heard nothing though the sister lived in the most haunted room.

The lady we saw was supposed to be Lady Deloraine, one of the Scrope family (the drawing-room panelling was bordered with the arms of Berkeley and Scrope), and was said to have been passionately devoted to the old house. She was a plucky and vigorous woman, for they say that she threw stones out of the window at Cromwell's soldiers when they came to pull down Lincoln Cathedral.



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# *Some Curious Stories*

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THE BLOODY HAND  
THE TWEENIE  
WARNING FOR A SUBMARINE



## THE BLOODY HAND

IN A CERTAIN VILLAGE ON THE SOUTH COAST A WIDOW and her two daughters were living in a house standing rather apart from its neighbours on either side. It was situated on a wooded cliff, and about a quarter of a mile from the garden was a waterfall of some height. The two daughters were much attached to each other. One of them, Mary, was very good-looking and attractive. Among her admirers there were two men especially distinguished for their devotion to her, and one of them, John Bodneys, seemed on the point of realising the ambition of his life, when a new competitor of a very different disposition appeared and completely conquered Mary's heart.

The day was fixed for the marriage, but though Mary wrote to the Bodneys to announce her engagement and to ask John to be present at her wedding, no reply was received from him. On the evening before the day, Ellen, the other sister was gathering ferns in the wood when she heard a faint rustling behind her and, turning quickly round, thought she had a momentary glimpse of the figure of John Bodneys, but whoever it was vanished swiftly in the twilight. On her return to the house, she told her sister what she thought she had seen, but neither of them thought much of it.

The marriage took place next day. Just before the bride was due to leave with her husband, she took her sister to the room

they had shared, the window of which opened on to a balcony from which a flight of steps led down to an enclosed garden. After a few words, Mary said to her sister, 'I would like to be alone for a few minutes. I will join you again presently.'

Ellen left her and went downstairs, where she waited with the others. When half an hour had passed and Mary had not appeared, her sister went up to see if anything had happened to her. The bedroom door was locked. Ellen called, but had no answer. She called again more loudly; there was still no answer. Becoming alarmed, she ran downstairs and told her mother. At last the door was forced open, but there was no trace of Mary in the room. They went into the garden, but except for a white rose lying on the path, nothing was to be seen. For the rest of that day and on the following days, they hunted high and low. The police were called in, the whole countryside was roused, but all to no purpose. Mary had utterly disappeared.

The years passed by. The mother and Mary's husband were dead, and of the wedding party only Ellen and an old servant were left. One winter's night the wind rose to a furious gale and did a great deal of damage to the trees near the waterfall. When the workmen came in the morning to clear away the fallen timber and fragments of rock, they came upon a skeleton hand, on the third finger of which was a wedding ring, guarded by another ring with a red stone in it. On searching further, they found a complete skeleton, round

whose dried up bones some rags of clothes still adhered. The ring with the red stone in it was identified by Ellen as one which her sister was wearing on her wedding day. The skeleton was buried in the churchyard but the shock of the discovery was so great that a few weeks later Ellen herself was on her deathbed. On the occasion of Mary's burial, she had insisted on keeping the skeleton hand with the rings, putting it in a glass box to secure it from accident and now, when she lay dying, she left the relic to the care of her old servant.

Shortly afterwards the servant set up a public house, where, as may be imagined, the skeleton hand and its story were a common topic of conversation among those who frequented the bar. One night a stranger muffled up in a cloak and with his cap pulled over his face, made his way into the inn and asked for something to drink.

'It was a night like this when the great oak was blown down,' the publican observed to one of his customers.

'Yes' the other replied. 'And it must have made the skeleton seem doubly ghastly, discovering it, as it were, in the midst of ruins.'

'What skeleton?' asked the stranger turning suddenly from the corner in which he had been standing.

'Oh, it's a long story' answered the publican. 'You can see the hand in that glass case, and if you like I will tell you how it came there.'

He waited for an answer, but none came. The stranger was

leaning against the wall in a state of collapse. He was staring at the hand, repeating again and again, 'Blood, blood,' and, sure enough, blood was slowly dripping from his finger tips. A few minutes later, he had recovered sufficiently to admit that he was John Bodneys and to ask that he might be taken to the magistrates. To them he confessed that, in a frenzy of jealousy, he had made his way into the private garden on Mary's wedding day. Seeing her alone in her room, he had entered and seized her, muffling her cries, and had taken her as far as the waterfall. There she had struggled so violently to escape from him that, unintentionally, he had pushed her off the rocks and she had fallen into a cleft where she was almost completely hidden. Afraid of being discovered, he had not even waited to find out whether she were dead or alive. He had fled and had lived abroad ever since, until an overpowering longing led him to revisit the scene of his crime.

After making his confession, Bodneys was committed to the county gaol, where shortly afterwards he died, before any trial could take place.



THE 'TWEENIE'

This story and the next were sent in 1920 by *Commander Francis Cadogan*, grandson of the *5th Earl Cadogan* who was at *Eton* with *Lord Halifax*

Mrs. Chilton (the real name is a little different), the wife of a captain in the Navy and a very sensible matter-of-fact sort of

person, took a couple of rooms on the third floor of a tall house near Palmerston Road, Southsea. Her husband was away at sea at the time, but as she went out a good deal and had a latchkey she asked the landlady not to trouble to wait up for her. Nevertheless, for a time the woman disregarded her request, and when Mrs. Chilton returned for the night, she would find the landlady sitting up for her, coming forward with a candle, and insisting on escorting her upstairs.

One night, however, the landlady was not there. Mrs. Chilton returned about half-past twelve, let herself in, found and lit a candle, and started upstairs. When she was about halfway up the zig-zag stair-flight she had a feeling that someone was following her and, looking round and down, she saw what was apparently a small 'tweenie' maid. As she had never noticed her about the place before and it was rather strange that she should be up and about at that time of night, Mrs. Chilton hurried on to the next flight of stairs. When she got there, she looked round, and there was the 'tweenie' just behind her. Mrs. Chilton now turned right round, holding the candle well before her to confront the girl, who clutched the banister with her hands, and sinking nearly to her knees, gave an imploring look. Mrs. Chilton, by now a little frightened, scurried on up to her room and neither saw nor heard any more that night.

Next day, when she questioned her landlady she was given the most unsatisfactory answers and decided to leave the

lodgings at once. Subsequently she heard that other people who had stayed there had had uncanny experiences, and that the house was known to have a bad name.



WARNING FOR A SUBMARINE

*Francis Cadogan* wrote to *Lord Halifax* that this story was 'general knowledge among the senior submarine officers and was told me by the officer commanding the *Mediterranean* flotilla in 1919.'

Among the commanders of submarines operating during the War from the south-east coast of England was an officer whom we will call Ryan, a man of striking appearance and charming personality, a great favourite in the mess of the Depot ship, and the sort of fellow who made everybody present cheer up when he came on the scene.

It was the custom for these vessels to leave for an observation patrol of from two to three weeks' length, usually off the Dutch shoals and the entrance to Jade Bay. They worked on the surface at night, but in the daytime, owing to the numerous German aircraft patrols, they were generally submerged, coming up at intervals to have a good look round through their periscopes. Ryan's ship left on one of these cruises, and when she never returned, it was taken for granted that she had met with bad luck and been sunk, either by the Germans or by some accident.

Some seven or eight weeks later, another submarine was operating in a similar fashion and on approximately the same beat as Ryan's. She was proceeding at slow speed and had

just broken surface with her periscope, through which at the time the second-in-command was observing. Care was necessary, since to emerge even to this extent had been proved from experience to be a dangerous and often a fatal hazard. It was a bright, sunny day, and as the officer was searching the seas with his periscope, he was heard suddenly to cry out, 'By Jove, there's jolly old Ryan waving to us like mad from the water!'

He immediately blew the tanks to bring the submarine to the surface, the commander and all aboard feeling that it was worth while taking a risk. Some of the men crowded into the conning tower and out on to the deck with life-lines, while others stayed below and prepared restoratives for Ryan when he should have been rescued. But when the submarine came up still keeping a little way on, not a sign of Ryan was to be seen, though the day was quite clear and a thorough search was made. Yet the officer was quite positive that it was Ryan whom he had seen and no one doubted him. Ryan was a man of such distinctive appearance that a mistake could hardly have been made nor had there been lately any talk of him to set imaginations at work.

After a short while an object was discerned in the sea right ahead and on the course the submarine was steering. As she came up with it, it resolved itself into two mines, which the submarine would undoubtedly have struck, if Ryan had not waved to warn her off.



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*The  
Restless Dead*

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**Q**This story was taken from *Blackwood's Magazine* for December 1892.



FIVE YEARS BEFORE THE DATE OF THIS STORY, GEORGE Woodfall, a wealthy and respected citizen of Sydney, beloved of all classes for his uprightness and benevolence, suddenly vanished, leaving not the faintest trace. His disappearance caused the most profound sensation, and as his affairs were found to be in perfect order, foul play was for a time suspected. No clue, however, was forthcoming, and after two years a monument was raised to the man who had earned the right to be called a public benefactor.

My name is Power—the Rev. Charles Power. I am the incumbent of the parish church of St. Chrysostom, Redfern, Sydney, and though a clergyman, I have never so far been led to suspect myself of being in any way a weakling, or given over to vain imaginings. I am forty years of age, and unmarried. My life has been uniformly practical and I cannot remember to have ever been the prey of any morbid sentiment whatever. Hitherto I have utterly disbelieved in apparitions of any description, regarding them as illusions presented to a temporarily, though slightly disordered brain, and I am free to confess that, had I alone been the witness of the apparition herein described, I should have felt bound to set aside my own impressions as unworthy of serious attention, on the grounds already stated, nor should I have further investigated the mat-

ter; and thus what is now known might never have come to light, and, for all we know, rest and peace might have been denied to a long-tortured soul. Thus much of myself.

Of my friend, William Rowley, I may say that he is a man of like mind unto myself; that as a scientist—famous throughout the world as the man who planned and carried out the canal system of New South Wales—his education has not been such as to render him fanciful, even did his natural instincts turn in that direction, which they do not. In a word, he is a hard-headed, shrewd, and utterly unimaginative man.

One thing must be stated at the outset. The exact locality in which the events here recorded came to pass we have concealed, fearing lest some too curious hand might disturb that lonely grave among the mountains, where lies all that remains of a man who, if he sinned, surely also suffered.

With what amazed horror the inhabitants of the city of Sydney will learn the fate of George Woodfall we can well imagine. When a man respected and beloved among us for twenty years departed suddenly from our midst, the whole community mourned for him as for a father. And now, when the veil is rent and he whom we believed a saint stands revealed the opposite of all we once conceived him to be, amazement is only natural. But, lest that feeling should change in the minds of some to that of scorn, I would say, ‘Judge him not; for you know not how he was tempted. Judge him not,

until you have been tempted even as he was, and then, if you resist, still judge him not, because of the awfulness of his doom.' The actual narrative of our experiences I shall leave to William Rowley, whose powers of description, as I find on comparing our two separately compiled statements, considerably surpass my own.

In the month of September last year, my friend Power and I were shaking the cobwebs from our brains and enjoying a short holiday among the mountains of the Great Dividing Range. I shall not, as Power says, indicate more nearly the precise locality to any but those who may have a personal or public right to the information. We had been out about a fortnight, and Power who is an enthusiastic botanist, had already made several new discoveries among the Australian flora, while I, gun in hand, contented myself with bringing down that particular section of the fauna most directly concerned with our breakfast and dinner. One evening—it was the 20th, and the date is indelibly engraved on my memory—when we were in the very heart of the lofty ranges, we began to cast about for a spot where we could camp for the night. Not far away we could hear the thunder of a waterfall, and judging that we should find what we wanted somewhere in its vicinity, we pressed on, descending deeper and deeper into a long gully, the sides of which were thickly covered with tall trees and tangled undergrowth. On reaching the bottom, we walked

forward till we came upon a pretty glade, formed by clumps of tall fern-trees, or rather tree-ferns, fringing a deep pool, which was formed, in part at least, by the water which poured incessantly from the heights, and constituted the head of a small creek, which flowed away, and was soon lost to sight among the dense foliage through which it forced its way.

This was the very spot for us, and during our supper we found leisure to observe the formation of the waterfall, exactly opposite to which we reclined. It was very curious. From the top of the cliff, the water, projected by some force, the nature of which we could not divine, sprang sheer out from the brink of the precipice, and descending in a mighty and unbroken arc, poured with a never-ceasing roar upon a great ledge of rock which jutted out some forty feet below. Here, after being collected, as it were, in a vast reservoir, it continuously overflowed and rushed down the black face of the rock in a torrent of silver foam.

Scarcely had we finished our supper, and, piling a few logs on the fire, lit our pipes for a yarn, than suddenly, as it seemed, the clear starry sky became overcast; a violent gust of wind rushed shrieking through the gully, scattering our fire in all directions, ceased, and for a few moments all was still. Then drip, drip, fell splashing a few heavy drops of rain, and, almost before we could reach the shelter of the nearest clump of ferns, a tremendous storm burst upon us with a fury which, notwithstanding my long experience of tropical storms, I have

never seen surpassed. The wind had died away, but the thunder rolled and crashed and reverberated in an awful manner. All the time, writhing and coiling and darting with forked tongues about the topmost summits, gleamed the electric fires, like a multitude of blazing serpents let loose upon the blackness of the night.

From the shelter, such as it was, where we crouched, Power and I watched the progress of the storm. So pitchy dark had it grown that, though touching, we could not see one another, and though we heard its never-ceasing rush, even above the fury of the storm, the great white mass of falling water immediately in front of us had become invisible.

Suddenly, a levin-streak flashed out of the gloom, struck, for one instant, the face of the cliff with a broad blaze of light, then vanished, leaving all once more in darkness. No, not all, for through the intense blackness there arose, just in the position of the watery arc, a soft and luminous mist. Faint and shadowy at first, it rapidly increased in density, becoming clearer to the sight, till at length it hung, as it were, a great white pall, suspended between heaven and hell. Crash! and another stunning thunder-roll shook the air, while again the forked flame darted its fiery shaft upon the face of the cliff. Then darkness once more, save for the misty veil now no longer white, but suffused with a pale pink glow delicate and fleeting as the first faint flush of dawn. Swiftly it deepened to

an exquisite tint, while thousands upon thousands of rosy drops were flung hither and thither, as the spray from the ledge was splashed and dashed in all directions.

But, beautiful as this was, scant time was left us to admire it. Another crash; another flash; a roaring, rumbling noise, as if an earthquake was upon us, and once again the scene was changed. There was one brief interval of perfect stillness; and then, in an instant, the pink glow went out. Darkness, while one might draw breath; and then a blood-red glare, so intense, so lurid, that it required but little imagination to suppose a torrent of blood descending on us where we sat. Out curved the great arc, in a vast sheet of crimson, and down the black face of the cliff poured the red stream in all manner of fantastic shapes. But now the light was not confined to the water alone, for the whole mountain glared and glowed and the giant trees seemed to reel in desperate conflict. Then, as suddenly as it had come, the glorious display vanished, and thick darkness settled once more upon everything.

Hitherto we had watched in silence, too absorbed in the grandeur of what we saw for speech. But now I turned to Power with a light remark about our good fortune in having witnessed such a phenomenon. As I spoke, I felt him grasp my arm convulsively. 'My God!' he said, in a voice so unlike his own I scarcely knew it, 'what is that?'

'What?' I exclaimed, rather startled by the tone in which he spoke.

He did not answer, but his grasp tightened on my arm I looked in the direction of the waterfall Heavens! what was it? Out of the gloom, high up in the midst of the arc of water, appeared a human hand It was the hand of a dead man, long and lean, with the blue decaying flesh shrivelling on the fingers. And, as it waved and beckoned, another hand, withered and gruesome like itself, grew before our eyes, and the long thin fingers twined themselves together as if in supplication Struggling, as it were, into material shape followed the arms, and then, as I sat, my mouth agape with horror, and every nerve tingling there, in ghastly completeness, stood a man. But what a man! He had been dead for years, on his bones the flesh had shrunk and dried, and in some parts rotted off, it was a man, yet not a man, a skeleton, yet not a skeleton, a horrid corpse endowed with life, or at least with the semblance of life. And now a great blaze of crimson light burst forth again, and all over the figure, and about and around it, seemed to flow streams of blood The awful thing writhed and rocked in what seemed to be a deadly paroxysm of anguish, now standing erect, and flinging its weird arms above its head as though invoking curses now falling on its withered knees in an agony I could bear no more and hid my face in my hands. When I looked again, the apparition had vanished. 'Power,' I said, falteringly There was no answer he had fainted.

When he came to, the moon was again shining high in

the heavens, there was no trace of the recent storm, and the cataract was a broad and gleaming sheet of silver, as though nothing had ever happened to disturb it. Power stretched himself, rubbed his eyes, and then sat up and looked about him in a bewildered way. At last he spoke.

‘Rowley,’ he began hesitatingly, ‘I have had a very curious dream. I—’

I thought it best to cut him short. ‘It was no dream, Power,’ I said; ‘for I saw it too.’

He looked at me for a moment incredulously, then covered his face with his hands. ‘You saw it too!’ he gasped. ‘Then, my God! what can it mean?’

Power is a cool and remarkably self-possessed man, and before very long his nerves recovered their balance and he spoke to me again. ‘Of one thing I am firmly convinced,’ he said. ‘So terrifying a spectacle would never have been allowed to appear to us without some reason. What do you suppose it to be?’

‘Really,’ I answered, ‘I have no idea and prefer not to imagine. We must go up there and try to find out’

‘My own thought,’ he said, rising to his feet ‘Come’

‘What, now!’ I cried in astonishment ‘Surely you will wait till morning! There is nothing to be gained by such haste, or to be lost by a little delay.’

‘That may or may not be,’ he replied firmly. ‘All I know is that I am going to try to get behind that veil of water to-night. Could you sleep’, he added with a faint smile, ‘while

there was a possibility of that ghastly thing appearing to us again? I could not.'

'There is not much chance of that,' I admitted. 'To tell you the truth I rather wish it would, for then we might arrive at some scientific explanation of it. I was so taken by surprise when the gentleman made his first appearance that I—'

'Rowley' he interrupted 'don't jest. We do not agree on all points, and your belief in the unseen is much weaker than I would have it. But here we have both of us had evidence of the most startling and convincing kind. Believe me, there is a meaning in this, and it is our plain duty to discover it if we can. Let us go now while we have the moon to light us.'

'All right,' I said, 'go ahead.' And so we began the ascent together

There is no need to set down all the details of that weary climb. It was about half-past nine when we began it, and eleven when we reached the level of the rock on which the arc of water broke. A chasm lay between us and it, looking across which we could see a dry wall of rock receding away from the water and leaving a wide passage, along which we could see from one end to the other.

'That looks like a cave of some sort,' said Power. 'Can't we reach it?'

'Not without jumping that chasm,' I replied, 'a feat I for one am not going to attempt. Let us see what can be done from the top.'

It took us another hour to reach the summit, and once there we seemed no better off than before, for the water flung itself with a furious rush over the brow of the cliff, while on each side the sheer face of the precipice precluded any idea of descending that way.

‘There must be an entrance somewhere,’ I said. ‘Let us set to work to find it.’

I then cut down a stout young sapling and began to lay about me with a will.

‘Whatever are you doing?’ cried Power.

‘Knocking down the brushwood and trying to find the entrance, if there is one, to that cave.’

‘Nonsense! If there were a hole you would have fallen through it long ago. Depend upon it, if there is any entrance at all from above, it is much farther away than this.’ With that, Power turned his back on me and disappeared among the rocks which covered the summit. Presently I heard him coo-ee. I answered, and following the direction of his voice, found him less than a hundred yards away, and almost in a straight line from where we had been standing.

‘Well,’ I asked, ‘have you found anything?’

‘Yes,’ he replied; ‘but I don’t know how much it means,’ and he pointed to a blaze on a fallen iron-bark tree by which he stood, under which a broad arrow pointed directly downwards.

‘A government surveyor’s mark, probably,’ I said. ‘How-

ever, we'll see. Once again I set to work, beating down the brushwood with my sapling. It took some time to clear away the bushes that had grown up under and over the arch of the fallen tree, but at last it was done and, stooping down, I began a thorough examination of the place. Beginning at one end of the tree, I went carefully towards the other thrusting my pole in all directions. When I had covered about two-thirds of the distance, I gave a sharp exclamation. 'Give me the lantern,' I cried.

'What is it?' asked Power his voice trembling with excitement, as he hastily unslung and handed me a small bullseye lantern which he carried, and for which on account of the brilliance of the moon, we had hitherto found no use.

'I'll tell you when I know myself' I answered and taking the lantern I flashed the light into the mouth of a great hole in the earth which my attack on the shrubs had laid bare. Power leaning over me and trying to peer into it.

'That is the way down, he said.

'Not a doubt of it, I returned. 'Come along.'

He started back. You're never going down there' he gasped.

'Yes I am,' I answered. I'm going to see this thing through now that we have got so far. Come on, you don't mean to let me go down alone?

'Of course not, replied Power, pulling himself together. But how are you going to get down? You don't know the depth of the hole.'

‘No, but I’ll soon find out. Look here.’ All the time I had been talking, I had been clearing the undergrowth from the mouth of the hole and thrusting my pole down to find, if possible, its depth. This I could not do, but struck by the fact that something hard projected at regular intervals from one side of the shaft, I concluded that the descent must have been made by a series of stakes driven into the earth. I verified this by leaning over the hole and thrusting my arm down, till my knuckles came into contact with the first rung of the ladder, if it may be called so. I pointed this out to Power.

‘Well, what are you going to do now?’ he asked.

For answer, I laid my sapling across the mouth of the hole, and swinging myself into it, found, as I expected, that my feet rested on a second support about half my own length lower down. Another step, another and another, and my feet touched ground so suddenly that I fell in a heap, with an involuntary shout.

‘Are you all right, Will?’ asked Power anxiously from the top.

‘Yes; at least I think so. But pass the light down.’

Power tied his handkerchief to the strap of the lantern and lowered it down to me, joining me himself a moment later.

‘We’re in for it now, Will,’ he said.

‘Yes,’ I replied, ‘we’ll not go back; but the sapling may be useful.’ And, swinging myself up once more, I drew in the long staff, and planting it on the ground below, sprang down

again to Power's side. He flashed the light hither and thither, and we could see that we stood at the beginning of a long and fairly broad passage, the extent of which we could not guess.

'Listen!' said Power, suddenly 'What's that?

I am not a very nervous man, but that startled ejaculation was somewhat trying in the circumstances, and so I told Power

But I did hear something, Will, he said apologetically

'Of course you did,' I replied, 'but it was only the waterfall. This was true, for we could distinctly hear the thunder of the water. I was leading with the lantern, and feeling doubtful of Power's nerves, I suggested leaving him behind and going on alone. 'How do you feel, Charles? I asked him. If you wait here, I'll go on by myself.'

This suggestion had the effect of bracing his nerves. 'Thank you,' he replied. 'I don't feel very happy, I admit, but anything is better than being left here by myself. We can't see anything worse than we've seen already. Go on.'

We went forward cautiously till presently we were brought to a standstill by what seemed to be a solid wall of rock barring our further progress. We soon saw, however that what appeared to be a complete wall was merely a partition between the passage in which we stood and another passage, or perhaps a cave, beyond. The communication was established by means of a natural archway more than large enough to admit a man crawling on his hands and knees.

Power went through first, while I guided his movements as well as I could with the lantern. Presently he called out.

‘Are you through?’ I cried, almost immediately behind him.

‘Yes,’ he answered, ‘and I’ve found something too.’

‘What is it?’ I asked.

‘I don’t know exactly. It feels like a bundle of sticks tied together.’

As soon as I had crawled through, the lantern settled the question. What Power had found was a bundle of torches.

‘This decides one point,’ I exclaimed, drawing one out. ‘We are not the first to visit this mysterious place. Let us light a torch and see better where we are.’

The first few torches, being damp and mouldy with age, refused to light, but at last I succeeded with two from the centre of the bundle. We each took one, holding them high above our heads. For a moment we were dazzled, and then a wonderful sight met our eyes. We were in a vast cavern. In front of us rose the grandest array of stalactites and stalagmites I ever saw, stretching away in innumerable aisles, as it were the nave of some mighty cathedral. From the roof, between the great pillars, depended the most exquisite tracery of quartz. From prisms here and there the light from the torches was flashed back in many coloured waves.

For a while we stood silent. At last Power said, in an awed voice: ‘We shall never see anything more marvellous than this.’

Let us go on,' I replied

We had moved forward for perhaps a hundred yards, the sound of the falling waters increasing at every step, when what was, as it were, the nave of the cathedral, with its rows of pillars, came to an abrupt end, and in front of us at right angles ran another row of columns, resembling an exquisitely wrought choir screen.

'Wonders will never cease,' remarked Power. It really would not surprise me to find an altar on the other side of that screen. Isn't it beautiful?'

'Very' I replied, and very annoying too, it completely bars our way in this direction.'

'Perhaps there is an opening somewhere,' he suggested, and moved off to the left.

I took a few paces in the opposite direction and presently cried out 'You're right. Here is the opening and it's an artificial one. I pointed to a large and ragged hole in the screen. Look at that. It has been smashed to pieces with a hammer or some such instrument.'

'Not a doubt of it,' Power agreed. But it must have been broken long ago for there are traces of a new formation in progress. What is beyond?'

'Another cave, not so large,' I replied, having already passed through the aperture. And beyond that is the waterfall, not sixty feet away. There is nothing here, I can see all round. Let us—oh!'

The exclamation was wrung from me by a sudden spasm of terror, which shook me from head to foot. I fell back against Power with such violence as nearly to upset him, and then clung to him trembling. 'Quick! let us go back. Don't look. This is no place for us. Flesh and blood cannot stand any more,' I gasped.

'For heaven's sake, old man, what's the matter?' cried Power. 'Here, drink this.' He handed me his flask.

The spirit revived me, and with a violent effort I collected my wits again. 'Take some yourself, Charles,' I urged. 'You will need it.'

He did so. 'Tell me what it is,' he demanded.

Holding my torch in my left hand, I pointed straight in front of me with my right. Power's eyes followed my finger. His torch dropped from his hand and I flung my arm round him just in time to save him from falling.

'My God!' he cried. 'How awful!'

Immediately in front of us yawned an open grave. The earth flung up on either side of it had grown hard and caked in the years that had rolled by since first it was dug, and almost turned to stone by the ceaseless drip of water from the roof. At one end lay a pick and shovel, carelessly cast aside. At the other were two fleshless grinning skeletons, in such a position that they seemed to be peering into the grave beneath them. The light of the torches played on the ghastly forms, throwing flickering shadows upon them, until they looked

like a pair of mocking demons, laughing into the nethermost pit.

'Let us go' cried Power

'No, no,' I said in an unsteady voice. 'They cannot harm us. They are dead enough. Let us examine the grave.'

Not while *they* are keeping guard over it,' protested Power

With one sweep of my sapling I thrust back the ghastly pair and they fell, crumbling into dust, by the side of the grave. We then peered into the open shaft, our torches drooped forward to throw in the light. There, in the shallow grave, were two forms that had once been human. The upper, a skeleton such as we had just removed, hid the form that lay below it, a form which, though emaciated, and in the last stages of decay preserved some lingering likeness to humanity. With a determined effort I thrust forward my sapling, when the hideous thing on the top instantly fell a crumbling ruin like the others.

Leaning forward, we held the torches far down into the grave. In one glance we recognised the face of the man we had seen in the waterfall earlier that night. I scarcely think we were surprised, and when our first feeling of dread had passed away the same thought struck us both simultaneously. Can we find the key to this mystery?

'We can try' said Power 'Look! There is an old coat, near the pick and shovel. Let us begin by searching it.'

The coat was fast falling to pieces, but had originally been

of good material and make, such as would be worn by a man in easy circumstances. Inside the collar, though almost effaced, was the name of the maker, one of the principal tailors in Sydney. We looked at each other.

‘Schuylen came from London and opened that shop about seven years ago,’ said Power. ‘So this must have been left here within that time’

‘Evidently,’ I replied, feeling in the pockets. ‘But here is something which may prove more definite,’ and drawing out a small tin box, about three inches square, I handed it to Power.

‘There is an inscription on it,’ he said; ‘but the torchlight flickers so, I can’t make it out. Let’s have the lantern.’ I turned the bullseye full on the lid of the box and Power read out the inscription. It ran:

GEORGE WOODFALL  
Pott’s Point, Sydney

‘George Woodfall!’ exclaimed Power. ‘Why, he must have been murdered after all.’

With a great deal of difficulty I forced open the lid and drew out from the box a small sheet of paper, folded square. ‘Shall we read it now?’ I asked, ‘or wait till we get outside?’

‘Now,’ answered Power eagerly. He had already begun to unfold the paper and after one glance at its contents uttered a cry of surprise. ‘It is a confession,’ he said, and read on.

'Yes' he repeated presently, 'it is the confession of George Woodfall, who lived among us so long beloved and respected. It is his own story of how he sinned and suffered'

We read it together, by the flickering light of our torches. The statement was short and to the point, giving few details, but setting forth a crime and the long mental agony endured by its unhappy perpetrator in consequence. It was as follows

At length I confess. I am driven to make this statement of my crime, lest I go mad before it is done. Twenty years ago I did it—twenty years ago on the 20th September, now close at hand. There were three of them, and I killed them all three. It was for gold. We had been mates at the diggings and were coming down to Sydney with our gold dust and nuggets. We had a good deal, more than enough to set each of us up, and a fortune for one. That's what tempted me. I don't know who they were, as each passed under some nickname. Blackguards all of them, and a rough lot, while I was what they call a gentleman! I thought I saw a chance to rebuild my fortunes with that gold, so I took it. I killed them in a cave we had struck one day while prospecting. It was a damnable deed, and black treachery. Whatever their crimes, they had always been good enough to me, letting me join their gang when I first came to the diggings and sharing fair and square in everything. They were sleeping, too, when I robbed them of their treasure and their lives at one and the same time. At least, two of them were sleeping, the third awoke just as my knife was

raised to strike him. He never said a word, but hurled himself straight at me. I caught his throat as he came and held on. I made sure he was dying before I loosed my grip and stooped to pick up my knife which had been dropped in the struggle. I leant over him to see if he was dead, but he had recovered and struggled into a sitting posture. His face was livid, his eyes protruded from his head and his tongue from his mouth. He could not speak, but he clasped his hands in prayer for mercy. I flung myself upon him and buried the knife in his heart. As the breath left his body, he uttered a yell which seemed to echo for long minutes through the cave. It rings in my ears now, and will ring till my dying day.

'I began with much difficulty to dig, or rather to hew out a grave, but at length desisted, reflecting that no one would be likely to discover the cave in so lonely and remote a spot, and that even if it should be discovered, there would be nothing to connect me with the bodies of my victims. So I laid the corpses in the shallow pit I had excavated and threw a few loose stones upon them. Thus I left them, and came to Sydney with my ill-gotten gold. Here I was quite unknown, and for a time I kept quiet, giving out that I had recently arrived from England and was on the look-out for a good investment for my small capital. At last the opportunity came. One week I invested almost all I had in the Benamburra mine; the next I found myself rolling in riches and the talk of

the town. From that day all I touched turned to gold. It seemed that I could not make a mistake. Of course, I kept my eyes open, but my luck was phenomenal. In the first flush of success, my excitement was so great that I almost forgot my crime. I went everywhere, did everything and before the year was out had nearly persuaded myself that I had forgotten. And then something happened that warned me I should never forget.

It was long past midnight, and I was sitting alone in the smoking-room of the house on Pott's Point. I had a houseful of companions, wild reckless fellows but one by one they had dropped off to bed, and I was sitting alone at the open window looking out on the quiet waters of the bay, my thoughts running in no particular direction. As I sat, a wave of bitter regret suddenly rushed over me, and I felt I would have given all my wealth and even my life to free my hands from the stain of blood. Had I acted on that impulse, gone to the nearest magistrate, confessed my crime, and paid the penalty, I might have saved myself an eternity of suffering, but I resisted and the impulse passed. My emotion, though transient, had been deep, and with a shaking hand I mixed myself a stiff glass of brandy and water, which I drained at a gulp. The last vestige of my hesitation disappeared and I turned to close the window. "Dead men tell no tales" I muttered with my hand upon the sash when, spoken as it were from the verandah immediately below me, I heard the

words, very softly uttered, "It is time; let us begin." Burglars, was my first thought, as I sprang back from the window and felt for my revolver. Concealed behind the thick curtain I awaited their entrance, but no one came. At last I crept to the window and peered out, my finger on the trigger and every nerve on the alert. Bright moonlight illuminated the verandah, the lawn, and all down the shrubberies to the water's edge, yet nothing was to be seen, nor did the faintest sound break the stillness of the night. "They have heard me and made off," I said to myself; and, revolver in hand, I slipped through the window and made a tour of the gardens and outhouses, without finding anything for my pains. Returning to the house, I went in and, having closed the window, put out the lights. As I turned to take up the bedroom candle, I started back with a cry of alarm, for a heavy body fell with a thud at my feet. Then, before I had time to recover myself, or even to wonder what it could mean, sharp and sudden and terrible, arose a cry. And then, in a flash, all was clear to me. I staggered back into a chair and covered my face with my hands. But I could not shut out those awful sounds that echoed round me, just as they had echoed in the cave on that fatal night. I knew it could not be long before the household was aroused, and then I should explain everything. So I sat and waited, for how long I do not know, until at last it was borne in on me that I alone could hear this devil's concert. With that thought the sounds ceased and silence once more

fell. Then, while still I could see nothing, I heard the voice of the man with whom I had had that desperate struggle 'George,' said the voice, "you are growing forgetful. We are here to remind you that this day week will be the 20th of September ' The tones of the voice were low and very even I could not answer, though I strove to speak, and presently the voice went on. "Your time has not come yet, George Before it does, we will teach you to remember Thursday will be the twentieth We shall expect you in the cave You will come, will you not?" "Yes, I will come.' I whispered, and then I knew no more

I need not go on I kept the tryst and passed through a night of such agonising horror that I wondered afterwards how I came to retain either life or reason after it. I have kept both, however, during twenty miserable years I am glad I have written this, for it has strengthened and comforted me. It may be had I written it, had I spoken it, earlier, I might have been forsaken by those awful things, which for these twenty years have haunted me perpetually, never leaving me, and surely as the date comes round, forcing me on that dreadful pilgrimage to the scene of my crime, there to spend one long night of terror on the spot where once I fell.

'Now something tells me the end is very near One more pilgrimage will I make, because I must, to that spot of bloodstained memories and when I return, I will give

myself up, and place this confession in responsible hands. Then it may be that my tortured soul shall find rest and peace at last.

‘GEORGE WOODFALL.’

We buried them all in the one grave, and over them Power read the burial service from his Prayer Book. Then, when we had piled a cairn of quartz over them, we turned away and left them.

*Note by the Rev. Charles Power*

Two ideas strike me with such force that I cannot refrain from giving expression to them. In the first place, it is evident that George Woodfall never came back from that last miserable journey on which he set out shortly after writing his statement. Why was this? Was it that, going with his confession unmade, he was delivered into the power of the spirits of darkness? And, in the second place, were not our steps guided to the cave that night, in order that his confession might be found, so that his long-tortured soul may find ‘rest and peace at last’?

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# *The Countess of Belvedere*

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**Q**THE story of the *Countess of Belvedere* appears in the *Ghost Book* without any indication of how or from whom Lord Halifax obtained it. It is not a ghost story at all, but was the kind of tale which never failed to delight him, both for its strangeness and for the fact that it dealt with the history of families with which he was acquainted. His friend, Mr Abelstan Riley, married the daughter of the 8th Viscount Molesworth, a descendant of the father of the *Countess of Belvedere*.



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THE COUNTESS OF BELVEDERE

MARY MOLESWORTH WAS THE ELDEST DAUGHTER, BY A first marriage, of Richard, 3rd Viscount Molesworth, an officer of distinguished bravery, who had been aide-de-camp to the Duke of Marlborough at the battle of Ramillies. After having attained the rank of major-general, he retired from active service and held many high and important situations in Ireland. For many years he was commander-in-chief in that country, residing with his family in Dublin.

It was during his tenure of the command that his eldest daughter Mary attracted the regard of a Mr Rochfort, a gentleman of a very ancient and honourable family in County Westmeath. He is described as a man of considerable talent and ability with expensive tastes and the most polished manners, but as being at the same time possessed of a haughty and vindictive temper, selfish, unprincipled, and dissipated in his way of living. At the date when he met Miss Molesworth, he was twenty-eight, a widower, and childless, his first wife having died a few months after the marriage. He had some interest in high places in England, a circumstance which possibly commended his suit to Lord Molesworth who, besides being charmed by his excellent manners, was sufficiently worldly to encourage the addresses of a man for whom honour and advancement might reasonably be anticipated. Indeed, at this time Mr Rochfort was considered a most

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promising young man and was so much in favour with the reigning monarch, George II, that he was soon to be created Baron Bellefield, and a little later a Viscount. Eventually he became Earl of Belvedere; and as it is by this title that he is best known, he will be so termed throughout this narrative. He was a man of striking and handsome appearance. The only portrait of him extant shows him at a comparatively advanced age, when he was no longer a smiling and successful courtier, but had begun to show in his features the working of the hand of time. He is in his parliamentary robes, tall, dark and handsome, but with a stern, gloomy, and saturnine expression on his face. Probably his appearance had altered since the days when he paid his court to Miss Molesworth and a milder manner and a more amiable temper would be expected of him. She at this time was only sixteen, an attractive and accomplished girl, with a gentle and thoughtful disposition. She seems to have been not altogether unaware of her suitor's true qualities. She saw in him a man who might well adorn a court, but was less likely to make his own family happy. She had observed that, kind and attentive as he invariably was towards herself, he was haughty and inconsiderate towards others; and the prospect of marrying him gave her little pleasure. However, she was only sixteen, too young and too gentle to offer much resistance to a match which all around her were pressing on her. With many forebodings she at length gave her consent, the marriage taking place on

August 1st, 1736 It is said that just before its celebration, she sat for her picture, and that when it was suggested that she should be painted in some fancy costume, she chose one which, especially in the shape of the coiffure, recalled a well-known portrait of that ill-fated captive, her namesake, Queen Mary of Scotland

In a very short time, Lady Belvedere's forebodings began to be realised in the coldness and neglect of her husband. He was surrounded by flatterers who, for reasons of their own, had opposed his marriage and were now on the watch to prejudice him against his young wife. There was a woman in particular who was her persistent and mischievous enemy and to whom she afterwards attributed most of her misfortunes. Having enjoyed for some time a strong influence over Lord Belvedere, the woman was naturally jealous of his young wife.

Although a year after the marriage Lady Belvedere disappointed her husband's hopes for an heir by giving birth to a daughter, in due course she presented him with a son, a fine and promising child and it may be supposed that for a time at least Lord Belvedere's affection for his wife revived. The birth of the heir was magnificently celebrated, the child being christened George Augustus after the king, who stood god-father by proxy and continued, until his death more than twenty years later to be a firm friend to the child's father.

During the first years of their married life, the Belvederes mostly resided at Gaulston, in County Westmeath, and here,

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in course of time, two other sons were born to them. The house was a large, gloomy building, dating from the days of Edward III. Later it belonged to Chief Baron Rochfort and is alluded to by Dean Swift. Such painful associations were to gather round it that the second and last Earl of Belvedere sold the house to Lord Kilmaine, who replaced it with a more modern and less forbidding structure.

As might be expected, a rural and domestic life had little attraction for Lord Belvedere. His absences were long and frequent, most of his time being spent either at the English Court or in Dublin, which, in the days before the Union, had its own Parliament and was the residence of the Irish aristocracy. Fortunately for Lady Belvedere, she preferred a quiet life in the country. She was a fond and attentive mother, and in the care and society of her children she was able to forget the estrangement from her husband. The three boys were still in their infancy, but the daughter was beginning to be of a companionable age. Afterwards Countess of Lanesborough, the girl gave early promise of that affection, gaiety, and beauty for which she was to be distinguished.

As time went on, the visits of Lord Belvedere to his wife and family became rarer and shorter, and when they occurred they added little to the happiness of the house. There was a gloom on his brow and a severity in his manner which filled his wife with fears for the future. She was convinced that his old friends and flatterers, and in particular her own enemy, had

been poisoning his mind against her, nothing else could explain his suspicious looks and savage tones

Eight years after the marriage, the storm broke. Lord Belvedere appeared at Gaulston and charged his wife with having been unfaithful to him, the partner of her guilt being alleged to be a relative of his own. The accounts which have survived state that Lady Belvedere at first received this accusation with surprise and anger, but that at last, in desperation, she astonished her friends by acknowledging her guilt. She was, in fact, entirely innocent, but, having failed to conquer her husband's suspicions, she hoped to strengthen the grounds for a divorce and so rid herself of a man whom she now found it impossible not to hate. Subsequently she repeatedly protested her innocence, and on her deathbed, some thirty years later, made a solemn oath to that effect.

The other party named was a married man, of exemplary character, an affectionate father and a most attached husband. He and his wife were both sincerely sorry for their young and neglected neighbour whose husband's profligacies were well known to them. Living, as they did, close to Gaulston, there was a constant intercourse between the two houses. Lady Belvedere knew that she would always find a ready and sympathetic welcome in the home of her friends, and it may well be that in their company she did not always resist the temptation of dwelling upon her unhappiness.

The charge of infidelity was followed by proceedings in

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court. The principal witness was Lady Belvedere's enemy, who had laid her plans so well that damages to the amount of £20,000 were awarded the earl; whereupon the ill-fated defendant, unable to meet so formidable a demand, fled the country. After residing abroad for many years, his Irish property being meanwhile neglected and his sole comfort being the society of his attached wife and family, he was induced to return with them to Ireland, believing that lapse of time would have softened Lord Belvedere's heart. It was a vain hope. He was arrested and sent to prison, where eventually he died, protesting to the last his innocence of the charge against him.

Meanwhile Lady Belvedere had discovered that her hopes of obtaining a divorce from her husband were illusory. Latterly he had spent little time at Gaulston; now he determined to abandon it altogether. The house was old and inconvenient, and the property, apart from the gardens, which were very fine, had little to recommend it to a man of his taste. He accordingly removed his establishment to a beautiful mansion some few miles away. It was a new house, immediately adjoining the demesne of Rochfort, the residence of a collateral branch of his family. The name of Rochfort is now almost extinct in the neighbourhood, but was at one time well known and esteemed, a member of the family representing Westmeath in Parliament for many years. Between Rochfort and Lord Belvedere's new house lies the

artificial ruin of an abbey, the tradition being that this building arose out of a family feud. The ruin was actually built by Lord Belvedere himself and was a further illustration of his vindictive nature. He had quarrelled with his younger brother, who lived at Rochfort, and wished to be spared the annoyance of seeing the other's house when he looked out of his windows. So, at great expense, he built the ruined abbey, fetching over for the purpose from Italy a celebrated Florentine architect.

But when Lord Belvedere moved from Gaulston, he had no intention of taking his wife with him. She was to remain, and her house was to be her asylum or prison, where he could keep her under close surveillance and such was his influence throughout the countryside that he had no lack of allies to help him to carry out his detestable plan.

Lady Belvedere was accordingly closely confined to Gaulston, forbidden visitors and restricted in her movements. Otherwise she appears at first to have been treated reasonably well. She had sufficient servants, the use of a carriage for driving about the extensive grounds, and all the clothes she required. It is said that drawing was her favourite occupation, and for this she was given every facility. She was also allowed to write letters, and it is a mystery why she did not complain of her treatment to her family or her friends, or if she did why they took no steps to help her. Perhaps they feared to interfere between man and wife, and probably Lord Belvedere had

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taken the precaution of giving his father-in-law a version of his daughter's conduct, such as would persuade him that strict seclusion was the only way in which further disgrace to the family might be avoided. It may be added that very soon after the confinement took effect, Lady Belvedere's mother, who might have exercised her influence in her daughter's favour, died; whereupon Lord Molesworth took to himself a second wife, who presented him with a large and increasing family. What at least is certain is that Lady Belvedere's relatives took no steps whatever to procure her liberation.

One consolation was at first allowed her. She was permitted from time to time to see her children, who were and continued to be deeply attached to her.

The years began to slip by. At the date of her confinement Lady Belvedere was not quite twenty-five, and as she grew older, her desire for emancipation became stronger. Doubtless she repeatedly appealed by letter to her husband; if she did, her efforts were quite unavailing. He would not even see her, though he paid frequent visits to the grounds and gardens of Gaulston.

One day, however, fortune seemed to favour her. Lord Belvedere unexpectedly entered the garden without having taken his usual precautions against seeing his wife. Unhappily he was accompanied by one of those friends who were especially hostile to Lady Belvedere. The latter, however, seeing her husband approach, rushed forward and threw her

self on her knees before him. She would not ask forgiveness for a crime she had not committed, but in a few hurried words she told of the hardness of her lot and begged to be released. So moving was her appeal that for a moment Lord Belvedere was shaken in his resolution, but only for a moment. His friend, without allowing him time to reply, turned reproachfully to him with the words, 'Remember your honour, my lord,' and drew him from the spot.

From that time onward Lord Belvedere hardened in his attitude. So far from modifying the treatment of his wife, he increased the restrictions on her liberty. She was allowed to walk in a certain portion of the demesne only, and at such times a person was appointed to accompany her. Her attendant was even given a bell, which he was instructed to ring when he and his charge were taking the air so that everyone might know they were about and avoid them.

After twelve years of captivity the lady at length succeeded, with the help of some faithful servants in making her escape from Gaulston. How she got away is not known, but the news was quickly taken to her husband who, anticipating that she would seek the shelter of her father's house in Dublin, took immediate steps to forestall her. Lord Molesworth was then living on the south side of Merton Square, and Lord Belvedere, reaching the house before his wife could arrive, worked so powerfully upon the feelings of his father-in-law that the latter gave strict orders for his daughter to be refused

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admittance. Poor Lady Belvedere was completely overwhelmed by such a reception. At her wits' end, and thinking of no danger but the chance of recapture, she took the one step that would be fatal to her. She gave her coachman orders to drive to Sackville Street, where resided the wife and family of the man, now dead, with whom she was supposed to have misconducted herself. There, if anywhere, she believed herself sure of a welcome.

Whether she ever got to her friends or not, we do not know. She was, however, followed, and Lord Belvedere's rage, on discovering her destination, may be imagined. She was seized, and within less than twenty-four hours after she had left Gaulston, she was back in her prison again. In future, her treatment was to be greatly altered. She was deprived of her comforts; the servants who had been too sympathetic with her were dismissed; she was not allowed to see her children, and even her little amusements and occupations were forbidden her. In fact, she was reduced to the bare necessities of life and surrounded by a set of attendants who treated her harshly and were constantly on the watch lest she should elude their vigilance. But indeed she had guessed what her capture would entail for her. It is stated that immediately after her unsuccessful flight her hair turned white in the course of a single night.

She endured this rigorous imprisonment for no less than eighteen years. It is hard to believe that this could have been

possible in a civilised country during the eighteenth century. It is equally surprising that her reason did not give way under her treatment. There was indeed a general though erroneous idea abroad fostered probably by her husband, that her mind had become deranged. We have no exact account of how she passed her time. A few particulars, however, have reached us. One informant was an old and valued servant, who lived and died with the Rochfort family. He was at one time a footman at Gaulston, the only one of the old staff who was allowed to remain after Lady Belvedere's attempted escape. As it was he stayed until the day of her release. When he was a very old man and his memory, particularly of recent occurrences, was beginning to fail, he could still recall with energy and feeling every circumstance connected with his unhappy mistress. He would relate how she would ask him anxiously for news of her children or of what was happening in the country. The children, however, were her chief concern, and the footman was the only person from whom she dared to ask for information of them. Many a time, he said when he was seeing to the fire, she would purposely delay him in his task, so as to prolong the conversation. At other times he would see her walking in the picture gallery and gazing at the portraits as though she were trying to talk to them.

When Lady Belvedere had almost abandoned hope, the hour of her release arrived. In November 1774, Lord Belvedere died, in the sixty-sixth year of his age, heavily in debt.

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and regretted by few. No sooner was the funeral over than his eldest son, accompanied by his brothers, hastened to Gaulston to set their mother at liberty. Eighteen years had wrought great changes in all parties, and especially in poor Lady Belvedere. She had, we are told, become prematurely old and haggard, had a scared, unearthly look, and spoke in a harsh, agitated whisper. When her sons arrived, they found her wearing the fashions of thirty years back, when her imprisonment began. As they entered the room, she was at first speechless; then faltered, 'Is the tyrant dead?'

Her sons, of course, were now fully grown, the eldest being in the prime of life; and so strong was the family likeness between him and his brothers that their mother was compelled to ask which was the new Lord Belvedere. They took her from Gaulston at once. The eldest son, who had just married, was about to travel to Italy with his wife, and thinking a complete change of scene might benefit his mother, proposed that she should accompany them. This well-meant plan failed in its object. The excitement of a journey was too much for one so long accustomed to solitude. Eventually it was arranged that while Lord Belvedere and his young wife went on to Italy, his mother should stay at a convent in France; and it has been erroneously stated that she died there, having first joined the Roman Catholic Church.

The truth is that, after spending the winter in Florence, Lord Belvedere returned for his mother and took her to Lon-

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don, where for twelve months she stayed with a friend of the family who had apartments at Kensington Palace. Her long imprisonment had so impaired her nerves that she now sought solitude and shunned the company of all but her nearest relations. Her dread of appearing in public was not irrational. Her story had begun to attract attention and was circulating round London in different versions, some less charitable than others, while the strangeness of her appearance made her an object of curiosity wherever she went. All that kindness and care could do for her was done, but her disquiet increased, and after the death of one of her younger sons she wrote to Lord Belvedere and expressed a wish that she might return to Ireland. She spent the remainder of her life in Dublin, first with her eldest son and afterwards with her son-in-law and daughter, Lord and Lady Lanesborough. So she ended her days in peace, surrounded by her grandchildren, and on her deathbed, after receiving Holy Communion, she confirmed with the most solemn oath her innocence of the offence for which she had suffered so long a captivity.



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